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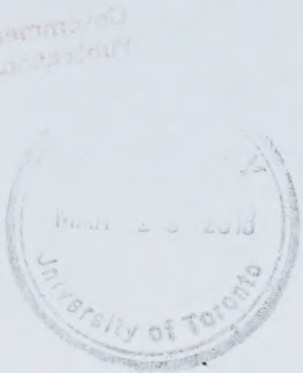
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Jeudi
22 mars 2018

Speaker: Honourable Dave Levac
Clerk: Todd Decker

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 22 March 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 22 mars 2018

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 21, 2018, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate. The member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to rise today and discuss the throne speech.

With my time, I'd like to go over some of the things that were in the speech, but first I would like to begin with things that are not in the speech and how they affect my communities. We know that this budget is going to have to have a lot of spending in it, but I still worry that the priorities aren't there. This government has had 15 years to figure out what their priorities are, so I want to go down the list of issues in my communities and raise them in response to the throne speech and before the budget is released.

Let me start with Fort Erie, Madam Speaker. You changed very quickly; there you go.

Working together, we have accomplished some incredible things in Fort Erie. We've managed to build a state-of-the-art educational institution for our children. There is still work to be done there to ensure that there are no capacity issues as the town grows and that kids have access to the very best as it becomes available to them. But we've made progress. Now we have the opportunity to use those old schools as community hubs and bring a number of community groups under one roof and expand those services.

This is an incredible opportunity and one I am proud to work with the community in supporting. This is a way we can ensure that the services offered in Crystal Beach, Ridgeway, Stevensville and Fort Erie itself can be expanded and made accessible to everyone in the town while using a property that is currently empty.

On the issue of the Fort Erie Race Track—and I know I've talked about this constantly for the last four years but it's an issue I'm passionate about—we've made a lot of progress. Working together with the town and the

residents, we saved the track from closure, and we have been able to reverse Woodbine's damaging stalling policy, which threatened our track. But let me say this clearly: We need gaming back. There are 300 jobs if we do that—300 jobs if we do that. I want it to be slots. If I could put them in there myself, I would, but we need this government to commit to returning gaming to Fort Erie. This budget could provide for the people of Fort Erie and it could create good-paying jobs.

Madam Speaker, I'm going to talk about something else that's incredibly important to me: long-term care. Seniors—our parents, our grandparents—built our communities. They built our communities with their bare hands and raised their families, yet when they need to rely on this government for long-term care or home care, they are being let down. Waiting lists for long-term care have exploded. There are over 30,000 residents on waiting lists right now. In some cases they're waiting over a year. The Premier should be ashamed of that record.

Seniors deserve better, and their issues must be championed. We need a new direction that actually respects seniors and puts them first. Forget these wasteful privatization schemes that this government is focused on. Solving the long-term-care crisis in Niagara needs to be put at the top of their priority list. The PCs have absolutely no right to comment on this. The last time they were in charge, they froze hospital budgets, cut home care, closed 28 hospitals and fired 6,000 nurses.

We also need to talk about health care more generally in the province of Ontario. Right now across this province we have people waiting in hallways to get the medical care they need. Let me say this clearly: Not one person in our province should have to wait for hours in a hallway to see a doctor or to get the care they need. Health care is a right, and so is getting the health care you need when you need it.

We can solve this problem in Niagara. If we move up the build of the new hospital, we can eliminate hallway medicine in Niagara Falls. Not only can we provide a higher standard of care for residents, but we can create good-paying jobs for local workers. If we move up the build, we can provide residents with a decent standard of health care, and working families with a decent income. There is absolutely no reason why the ministry should not focus its attention on making this happen.

Madam Speaker, another health care issue is mental health supports. I can't stress how urgent the need to deal with the lack of mental health supports is. We have thousands of children on wait-lists trying to see a doctor who need our help. They can't wait for the support they need.

They need it now. People are struggling, and they feel like they're struggling alone. We need to reach out and tell them that they're not alone, that we're here for them and we're taking this very seriously. That means investing in these supports immediately. If there's one thing we can justify spending government funds on, it has to be providing mental health support to residents. We can do this in coordinated fashion and put these all under one ministry with a mandate to fix the crisis.

When people are struggling with mental health issues, they begin to struggle at work or find it even harder to find a job in the first place. It isn't hard to see how this impacts our province, so it makes good economic sense to provide this service as well. I know the PCs don't support this action—because they were the ones who closed mental health facilities down in the first place—but this is too important to ignore.

In addition to moving up the build of the new hospital, we must also move up the GO train deadline. Again, the quicker we make these projects happen, the sooner we can put people to work. If you understand what I'm trying to say here—whether it's in Fort Erie, Niagara Falls or all of Niagara, what are we talking about? Putting people to work with good-paying jobs they can support their families on.

0910

We've been meeting with Metrolinx executives and the executives from Niagara Health on both of these issues to try to move up the dates, because it's clear to the people in Niagara Falls that they need these services sooner rather than later.

On the GO train file, we should be extremely proud. All of the actors across a number of levels were able to come together and make this project happen—everyone except the PCs, who were opposed to the project. Regardless of that, we were able to show what we can accomplish when we all work together. I invite those members to work with us on this project and to move these deadlines up. Our cities are growing; we need those services now to keep up.

Madam Speaker, as you can tell, I'm going through my riding, if anybody was wondering.

Let's talk about Niagara-on-the-Lake. In Niagara-on-the-Lake we have the best wineries, the best craft brewers, and some of the best food and hospitality you can find anywhere in the world. Now is the time to invest in these businesses and remove the barriers they face. They're growing at an incredible rate and, more importantly, they're providing jobs for our residents.

Mr. Brad Duguid: I'm listening to you, Gatesy.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate that.

The government should be supporting these industries and doing everything in its power to ensure that they grow to their full potential.

Let me talk about arts and culture in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Niagara-on-the-Lake's arts and culture industry is nothing short of awe-inspiring. Places like the Shaw have created an industry that not only draws in tens of thousands of visitors to support our local industries but pro-

vides careers for young people in the arts. It provides a soul for our province. I know that many politicians overlook how important the arts and culture industry is in communities, but that's a mistake. I'll say that again: That's a mistake.

If they want an example of how well that industry supports towns and cities, and why they need government investment, I invite them to come to Niagara-on-the-Lake and tour the wonderful town with me. I guarantee you, it will make my point.

We also need to talk about developments and what role this province will play in ensuring that developments are sustainable.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is truly a jewel of Canada. The residents have worked very hard to preserve the incredible history of the town, which, quite frankly, is the history of this great nation and province. People live there because they love their community. Right now, there's a controversial development project in the town which revolves around a resort that will include a six-storey building—I'll repeat that: It will include a six-storey building. The most important thing to me about this project is to listen to the residents first. They're the ones who have built and maintained that town and made it what it is today. They deserve the credit for making the town what it is and their voices must be heard. They don't want to lose the character that makes that town so special, and frankly, I stand with them.

Madam Speaker, this government does have a role to play in this. I know there's going to be changes to the OMB so it's clear they're willing to work on this. They have to make sure that that process takes into account what the residents want, what the community wants, what the town wants and, quite frankly, what elected officials want.

I'd also like to talk about the Niagara-on-the-Lake historical society and museum. A little while ago I was contacted by the society asking me to support their request for increased funding through the Community Museum Operating Grant. When this request came to my office, I didn't even think twice about supporting this. The work they do there is incredible. They preserve the history of the town but also the history of this country which flows through the town. They work hard to build a sense of community in Niagara-on-the-Lake and to ensure that their doors are open to the residents.

Of course, like in every community, I have to mention the volunteers. The time and effort that their volunteers put in to make the historical society and museum operate the way it does is nothing short of inspiring. I know a lot of you have heard me bragging about those residents, but I'll say it again: As the MPP who represents them, I'm truly blessed to have such selfless people working in our community. For those reasons, I want to say in this House that the work they do deserves support, and I'm proud to join in their request to continue to increase this funding. I have seen first-hand the good work that they do in the community. I believe this is exactly what the provincial funding should be used for.

I'd like to talk about another issue that stretches across all communities: hydro rates. I know the Premier doesn't like to talk about it anymore, but hydro rates are a crisis in Niagara. People and businesses are struggling to cover the costs that have come because of the privatization of Hydro One. It was wrong then, and the rates today show that.

We need a new plan that gives people hope and that actually lowers their rates. Seniors shouldn't have to choose between hydro bills and medication. Young people shouldn't have to choose between owning a home and hydro bills. Employers shouldn't have to worry about hydro bills or hiring someone.

In Niagara, we're directly beside the Falls, yet we watch the province sell our power at a loss to the United States. It's absolutely unacceptable that this is still happening today. People have been fighting against this for four years. The Premier needs to act. It's time to put an end to the wasteful privatization scheme and actually produce a plan which lowers hydro bills. That means bringing hydro back into public plans and lowering their bills by 40%. That makes more sense than padding the pockets of private investors or the rich and famous.

We've seen it with gas prices, too. We offered a solution, and it was voted down by the Liberal Party. It's clearly not a priority for them.

The prices of a barrel of oil are still lower than they were a few years ago, yet our prices keep going up. I was in my riding again yesterday. It's \$1.27. We never see those savings at the pump; instead, what we see are constantly increasing gasoline prices and excuses that aren't worth the paper they are written on.

My residents, your residents and residents all over the province of Ontario are not dumb. They can see what's happening here. They know they are being gouged, and they know the government is doing nothing to stop it. I'm going to repeat that line, because it's important: They know they are being gouged, and they know the government is doing nothing to stop it.

Just last week in Niagara Falls, the gas prices jumped by 10 cents for no reason at all, overnight.

Hon. Daiene Vernile: Isn't that a federal issue?

Mr. Wayne Gates: As the Liberals are heckling me a little bit over there—the reality is, you shouldn't go to bed at 12 o'clock at night and it's \$1.17, and the very next day you wake up and it's \$1.27. That's happening right here in Ontario. It's happening in your community that's heckling you. Your residents don't like it, just like my residents don't like it. So if you want to heckle me on gas prices, go right ahead, but I think it's wrong in the province of Ontario.

Hon. Chris Ballard: I'm agreeing with you—

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate that.

That means bringing hydro back into public plans and lowering the bills by 30%. That makes a lot more sense than padding the pockets.

I've got only three minutes left, and I'm glad I finally woke the Liberals up.

If it's a long weekend, we know the prices are going to jump again. It's nothing more than gouging, and the

people need a break. It's all about affordability; whether it's hydro bills or whether it's the gas prices, that's what it's about. That's our job here: Making sure it's affordable to live in the province of Ontario.

On this throne speech, all I can say is this: It seems there's far too little here and that it's far too late. The Liberals are now saying that they care about child care and about prescription medicine. They now say they care about hallway medicine and long-term-care wait-lists. They've had 15 years to fix these problems. How can they expect us to believe they want to fix them now? How can anybody believe them?

0920

Madam Speaker, I believe we need pharmacare in this province—for everyone. I believe we need dental care in this province—for everyone. We can do this. We don't need the \$6.1 billion worth of cuts that Doug Ford is promising. Families don't need more cuts in their lives. Instead, they need things that will give them hope. They need change, but they need change for the better, change that will help them get ahead and have better services.

Madam Speaker, the throne speech didn't mention homeowners at all. One of the things we've been working so hard on is Tarion reform. Ultimately, we ended up voting against that bill because it simply didn't protect homeowners. That's the key to the bill: It didn't protect homeowners. Homeowners need us; they need us now. Getting rid of Tarion but replacing it with another system that still gives too much power to home builders and not enough power to homeowners is no better. What about the people who have been battling with Tarion for years already? This government had a chance to make this right and they failed that test, so it's time for a real change on that front.

I can say I'm happy to see our NDP finance critic was able to pass a motion directing the Auditor General to investigate Tarion. I suppose I could sum up my feelings on this by simply saying that it's about time. There is so much more that needs to be done for the homeowners, but this is an important step which will prove many of the things activists and homeowners have been saying for years.

Madam Speaker, there are so many issues here that it's hard to see where to begin. Obviously, this throne speech can't contain everything, but it's clear to me that they missed some very big priorities. I look forward to seeing the budget and going through it in detail. I hope it addresses some of these glaring holes.

We need change in the province of Ontario. We need change for the better.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Niagara Falls. I always do appreciate his comments, especially when he talks about his riding. I don't think we agree on all things—it's probably about 50-50 in that speech—but I very much appreciate his local efforts and his efforts to raise the profile of his riding.

The throne speech is about choices. It's about the intentionality of our choices, and it's very clear what we're going to do. If you take a look at the announcement yesterday on mental health and the \$2.1 billion over the next four years for more access to community-based therapy, mental health workers for high schools, more youth wellness hubs, more supportive housing, and more access to residential withdrawal and treatment services for youth and adults suffering from addictions, I think that's very clear about what our intentions are and what we're going to do to achieve that.

I would like to remind the member about choices. He talked about mental health beds, and I just want to remind him: When your party was in power, you made choices too. You closed 13% of the mental health beds. That's not to wag a finger. I'm just saying that we all have to make choices. We all know that in this House.

He wanted to talk about change. Actually, things that change people's lives are eliminating coal so there are lower rates of childhood asthma, and full-day kindergarten so the kids get a better start in life and families can get out there and participate in the economy earlier. It's like OHIP+, making sure that every child and youth under 25 has access to free prescription medications. It's like fighting for that stronger Canada Pension Plan so that everybody has some more retirement security. Those are the things that change people's lives. That's change, and that's what we have been doing for 15 years.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm happy to add my few minutes of comments to the member from Niagara Falls. I think all of us use the opportunity of responding to a throne speech to talk about our riding, and it's perfectly appropriate for him to do so. But when he talks about the activity and points fingers at other parties about mental health, I think that we have to put a few facts on the record.

I understand the member has been here since 2014, but perhaps he could go and speak to his member from Nickel Belt and talk about the 18 months that, collectively, all of us from the three political parties spent on mental health and addictions. It came out as a result of a 2008 resolution from a—wait for it—Progressive Conservative member. Then the committee was ultimately struck, and 18 months later we came forward with a report. So please—please—don't tell me that only one political party has a lock or can be able to speak on specific issues, because it's wrong and it's not conducive to the type of co-operative legislative activities that we can do here when we actually work together and come forward collectively with positive ideas.

I'm pleased that he was talking about mental health and the need for further investments, but to suggest that one political party did nothing while everybody else was talking about it is clearly wrong. All you have to do is look at the 2008 resolution and the 2010 all-party support that came out as a result of that.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I was very interested in this piece that was given by the member from Niagara, who really showed what 15 years of Liberal government means in his riding. He went through the different responsibilities of the provincial government and what that looks like on the ground.

He gives the example of the Niagara Health System, the hospital that is in his riding that has been overcrowded—just like every other large community hospital throughout Ontario—where people are admitted to the hospital but there is no bed for them; where all of a sudden, what used to be a bathroom or a shower room is becoming a bed for people to be admitted to; where what used to be a TV room or a lounge is now a place for four, sometimes five people to be admitted.

Those are rooms that don't have a sink. Those are rooms that don't have a bathroom. Those are rooms where the indignity of people goes on and on, where you have to use a commode, where everybody in the room knows that you are using the commode. It is degrading. It is not what people expect from our hospitals, but this is where we are at in Ontario. He gives good examples of what that means for the people he represents.

He also talks about the need for pharmacare. Ontario has six drug plans right now, the latest one being OHIP+. But pharmacare means universal. It means no matter who you are, your age or your condition, you will have drug coverage. This is something that people need, people want. We now have a speech from the throne that promises to undo all of the damage they have done for 15 years. They have had 15 years to do that.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It really is a pleasure to rise today and to speak to the comments made by the member from Niagara Falls. I just want to reiterate what the member from Ottawa South said with respect to what a great advocate he is for his community.

He did spend a little bit of time talking about the tremendous culture in Niagara Falls. I can attest—and do so proudly in front of our Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport—that we do support tourism, culture and sport in all of our communities. As the former PA, I know that well. Some \$32.5 billion is contributed to our economy every single year, and 400,000 direct jobs as a result of culture and sport in our communities.

So I reiterate that the member from Niagara Falls is absolutely correct: The culture in the Niagara Falls area is absolutely alive and well.

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I do also want to talk a little bit about the mental health piece of the throne speech. The four-year investment of \$2.1 billion is actually going to rebuild the system.

I would also like to reiterate the comments made by the member for Dufferin—Caledon, that we really do need to co-operatively and collectively work together. Listening to the throne speech and hearing each of the pieces and how they are going to rebuild, frame and improve the

lives of Ontarians across the province was extremely inspiring.

Just on the mental health piece, we're going to have easier access for local schools to mental health care and community-based organizations. And 12,000 more young people will access services—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

I'll return back to the member from Niagara Falls to wrap up.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'll start with the last speaker, because I think she said some things that are very, very important. Niagara and the Ministry of Culture—the \$32 billion in investment. I believe that Niagara deserves more; we need more. So I'm trying to tell you to send some money down to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Falls and Fort Erie.

The one thing she also said is that Niagara is alive and well. I agree with her on that. I think that's because they've got a really good MPP down in Niagara Falls. I think that's the reason why it's alive and well, so I appreciate that compliment.

I'll talk to my good friend from Ottawa as well. On mental health issues, let's be clear: In my riding, in my area—not just my riding, but the other MPPs from Niagara, including St. Catharines and Welland—the Liberals closed 70% of the mental health beds in Niagara, at a time when we need it the most. As we all know, one in five now have mental health issues.

To my colleague from the PC Party, who talked about the committee that they had and that it's all three parties: I only say the facts, and the fact of the matter is that the PC Party under Harris—because I know; I participated in all the days of action that we had to have in the province of Ontario—did close 28 hospitals. There's no argument there. Six thousand nurses lost their jobs; there's no argument there.

But when you talk about mental health, not only did they close 28 hospitals, they also closed all of the mental health hospitals. All of the mental health hospitals were closed under their leadership. What bothered me the most around that is that they didn't take the money they got from closing them and reinvest it back into mental health services. That was a mistake. That was a mistake for young people who were suffering from mental health—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Further debate? I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on the speech from the throne. I will be sharing my time with the member from Don Valley East as well.

It's always a great honour and privilege to stand up in this House, in this Legislature, and speak on issues that are important to our province and to my community of Ottawa Centre. It's an even greater honour when I see a good friend of mine going back to university days, Suleman Aziz, who's here in the House with his family. We go back to our late teens and early twenties. He can share a few stories about me through university days. They are here because Suleman's son Humza is a page

from Guelph. So it's really a welcome to the whole family. Thank you for being here.

I'm very excited to speak about this speech from the throne because it's a speech that speaks to the values that we all share as members of our society and our community. The value is one and simple, and that is to look after each other and to care for each other in our lives every single day. As human beings—fathers and mothers, grandparents, uncles and aunts, friends and neighbours—we are determined to look after each other and we are persuaded to look after each other and to care for each other.

As a father of two young children, the number one big lesson that I continue to teach my children is to look after each other, to care for each other, because that's the most important value we have. This speech from the throne really captures that. I think it's exciting to talk about that, because sometimes governments are seen as large institutions removed from our daily lives. People forget that government has a very important role: to make our lives easier and to make our lives better.

This particular speech from the throne, and my reason for supporting the speech, is exactly that, because it really focuses on things that matter to us, and that is to care for each other. The speech really encapsulates our desire to build a caring and fair society, a society that gives everybody an opportunity to grow, because that's how we will build Ontario up.

When I'm in my community of Ottawa Centre, the conversations I'm having with people at the doors as I am out canvassing every weekend—as I do and as I have been doing over the last 10 years since I've been an elected member of provincial Parliament—are around the kind of initiatives the government is working on that are making life easier for everyone. Things like OHIP+—making sure that we've got, truly, for the very first time, a pharmacare program that is going to help our children and youth until the age of 25.

I cannot tell you how many parents come up to me or tell me at their doors what an incredible program it is and that it's the right thing to do. Now that we are planning to expand that program to cover all our seniors—65 and plus—I think it's even more exciting to note that we are getting that much closer to a universal pharmacare program, with a coverage of all 4,400 medications that are available by way of prescription.

Similarly, with the expansion of the OSAP program to ensure that students who come from low- to mid-income families are able to get the college and university education they deserve: No longer is the criteria whether you have the ability or the means to go to college or university. The financial part is taken care of. If we are going to truly put an end to the cycle of poverty, we know education is the most powerful tool to accomplish that. By making free tuition available for students coming from low-income families to mid-income families is a tremendous move.

Not to mention the increase in minimum wage, to \$14 an hour starting last January and then to \$15 an hour on

January 1, 2019: Truly, making sure we have a living wage in our province is really creating an opportunity for people who rely on minimum wage to live a better life so that they are not depending on food banks and so that they are actually able to use that money to buy clothes for their families and to get good, healthy food for their children—the kinds of things we should all care about.

That is what a care agenda looks like, where we are focusing on things that help people in their day-to-day lives. That is what our government is doing.

I would be remiss if I did not speak about the kinds of important investments we are making in my community of Ottawa Centre to make sure that people have the most important public services available to them, because those are key—things like education, health care and infrastructure.

In terms of health care, we are really fortunate in Ottawa Centre to have three really robust community health centres that provide just remarkable health and social services at a community level in the downtown core of Ottawa. All of those three community health centres are growing, thanks to the investments that our government is making.

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For example, we just recently started a major expansion project at Centretown Community Health Centre—over \$5.4 million—so that they can serve more people from our community on things like mental health and addiction services, diabetes, child care: very important services to have a healthy downtown community.

Similarly, the Somerset West Community Health Centre was just recently approved as a supervised safe injection site by the federal government. Our government is providing them the operational funding and the capital funding so that a supervised injection site could open as quickly as possible. Again, that just goes to saving lives, making sure that those in our community who are suffering from the disease of addiction, are victims of this opioid crisis, have the kinds of the supports they need right in the community.

I'm also very excited about the Carlington Community Health Centre, which is building a very unique housing and health hub. They're building 42 affordable housing units for seniors, but they will have access to state-of-the-art community health care right onsite. That's a project almost close to \$5 million. That is taking place between my riding and Ottawa West—Nepean, represented by Mr. Chiarelli.

Similarly, on the health care front, the Ottawa heart institute, which is a remarkable institution, is seeing a \$200-million expansion. Actually, the opening is tomorrow, so I can't wait to tell you how excited we are to have that world-class health care.

Education is another fundamental value, as I spoke to earlier. When I see the schools in my community, like the new Broadview school, a \$15-million investment, up and running—and Elmdale Public School, located in Wellington Village, will be seeing an investment of \$3.6 million so that we can build an addition and then upgrade

this historic school into a modern place for our students to learn.

I'm really excited to note that, for the first time, we have our first French public school, École élémentaire publique Centre-Nord, in my community. We had a French Catholic school; now we also have a French public school, where my son is attending and getting his education now, making sure that we are further promoting and expanding education in French.

I'm also privileged to have Carleton University in my riding, which continues to grow with quality programming, with more students getting a good education. Of course, a lot of those students are benefiting from the changes that we have made to our OSAP program.

Speaker, lastly, on infrastructure, if I may very quickly highlight to you: The LRT construction is going forward. Phase 1 is almost done—an investment of \$600 million by our government. But we're not just stopping there. We, in fact, have already committed an over \$1-billion investment in phase 2 of the LRT. That will really connect the rest of the city to the downtown core, including our airport, so that Ottawa, as a capital city, is really, genuinely a G7 city. We're really, really excited about that.

Not to mention the investments we're making in affordable housing, such as projects by Cornerstone Housing for Women and the John Howard Society, where we really focused on putting an end to chronic homelessness, in parallel with the provincial Ontario housing strategy. These projects, which are happening in the downtown core—in the community of Ottawa Centre, the riding that I have the honour of serving—are really starting to make an impact in making sure that people have access to good housing with appropriate supports around mental health and addiction and other health care services.

Speaker, I can go on and on, but I just wanted to give you a highlight of what, really—on the ground, on the front line, in the community—a care agenda looks like, an agenda that is championed by our Premier and this government. That's why I am so motivated and excited to support this speech from the throne and the budget that is coming. I urge all members to do the same thing.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand today in this House and speak to the throne speech. I want to start by talking about where we are as Ontarians. I believe that there are a lot of Ontarians who need help out there. We're a government that I believe has put in place a lot of different options for people to access services and help when necessary.

But I also just want to mention that if you listen to the opposition consistently speak about the state of Ontario, you get a very gloomy picture: that Ontario is just this horrible place that is existing, where everyone is doing poorly, our economy is doing poorly, our health care system is doing poorly and our education system is doing poorly. The fact is, Madam Speaker, that Ontario is a

great place to live. Ontario is, without a question in my mind, one of the most beautiful places and one of the best places anyone can live in on this entire planet. That's why we get so many people from around the world coming to Ontario each year; we get so many people from across the country coming to Ontario every single year.

They talk about the economy being so bad in Ontario. You hear these little pieces of information they put forward—especially the Conservatives. They talk about the economy doing poorly. I think it was back in 2012 that there were more buildings being built in the GTA than all of North America combined. The former Premier used to say that. Our economy is the strongest now of the G7 countries. We have the lowest unemployment in almost 20 years.

There are a lot of great things that are happening in Ontario. We've gone through a transition. Our economy has changed. We've gone from more of an analog- to a digital-style economy, so things are going well. When I hear the opposition talk about how sad it is in Ontario and things are so gloomy—you know what? Get out there and talk to people. Knock on some doors, walk down the street, talk to people about how they feel being in Ontario and you get a completely different picture than this image you get that is coming from the opposition.

We want to put in services and we want to make sure that people have the services they need when they need them. I remember growing up in Flemingdon Park and in Don Mills. My mother was a superintendent of a building. She used to clean the building that we lived in. I can remember when my parents separated—I was about 15 or 16 years old—my mother had to go and change her job because it just didn't pay enough. She actually got a job at—it was called Bloorview MacMillan at the time, and she served food there. That's what she did for a living to put food on the table in our house. I remember that the management company said that she had to leave the building because she was no longer the superintendent. I remember my mother going to the Flemingdon Park legal clinic to get help because we were being thrown out of the building. I can remember her getting that help and someone there working with her, and we finally got to stay in the building.

I always think of that story, and I think of my brother, who went back to school and he was working in a restaurant. It was a low-paying job. He decided to go back to upgrade his skill sets and so he took the Second Career course. This was maybe in 2007-08. It was another government program that was offered by our province. My brother is now a welder in the Kitchener–Waterloo area; he is a welder out there for Caterpillar.

For me, those are the types of things that we need to have in place, so when people go through some challenges they have the help out there.

But there is a myth out there. There is a myth that Liberals are not good managers of the economy. There's a myth out there that—you know, it's funny, someone came to see me recently to talk about the Liberal record. He was a Progressive Conservative. We sat down in my office.

Mr. James J. Bradley: Progressive Conservative.

Hon. Michael Coteau: A Progressive Conservative, that's right.

We had a really good conversation. I went through some of the numbers and went through some of the data, and I showed him numbers that came out from some think tanks that are not necessarily very supportive of Liberals. But they concluded as well that the economy has been managed well over the last decade when we went through—almost a decade ago, it was the start of one of the worst economic recessions in the history of this country. During that time period, the Harper government, who were Conservatives in power—the former leader of their party was part of that regime—they ran the largest deficit in the history of Canada.

In addition to that, if you think about Ontario, and I don't know if many Conservatives know this, but the budget has been balanced in this province in the last 45 years, I think, nine times. Five of those times have been managed by Liberals; it's been balanced by Liberals.

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Going back to Harper, by the time he came in up until 2015, he ran a deficit, collectively, of about \$150 billion, so all the gains that Chrétien and Martin made over those years were just completely wiped out.

There's a myth out there in Ontario that the Conservatives are these great managers of the economy. This is what the Conservatives do when they come into power. This is the game plan. It doesn't matter if you are in Ontario, if you are across this country or even in the United States; this is what the Conservatives do: They come in and they say, "Enough is enough. We're going to make some cuts because we need to save money."

But here's what happens: They make those cuts—for example, I was part of the literacy sector, and the Conservatives, these guys, cut \$27 million from literacy and basic skills. You know when you talk about helping a person? That's the basic form of helping a person: having them have the ability to read. They cut that funding to adult literacy.

The Conservatives opposite, when they were in power—and this is, I think, the best example anyone can give about the type of approach the Conservatives take here in Ontario, which is so opposite from what we have offered in our throne speech. Developmental disabilities in Ontario was cut by 7%. Think about that for a second. These are our most vulnerable people in our society, the developmentally delayed. Developmental services: That line was cut by 7%. So when the Conservatives stand up and they say, "You know, you're not doing enough for these folks and you're not doing enough for these folks," when you go down to the very basics, literacy and basic skills, and when you talk about things like developmental delay and developmental services, imagine a government making those cuts to those types of services.

I think it just says exactly who we're dealing with. We're dealing with a group of people who stand up and say they believe in making Ontario great and supporting people. But the best thing you can do if you want to

really figure out the true intentions of a group of people who want to manage the government or the economy of a province is just to look at their track record. If you look at our track record over the last 15 years—the NDP is saying, “Over the last 15 years nothing has been done.” We have the strongest economy, number one. Number two: We went from an education system where one third of our students were not graduating—we have gone from 66% graduation to 86.5% today, I think it is. We have transformed public education. We have transformed health care from the longest to the some of the shortest wait times in the country. Now with our mental health investments—remember, the Conservatives wanted to invest \$1.9 billion over 10 years. We’re investing \$2.1 billion over four years.

Ms. Laurie Scott: What about children with autism?

Hon. Michael Coteau: The member opposite from Kawartha is talking about autism services. Remember, it’s your leader who wanted to get rid of those kids, and throw them out of their neighbourhood, who had autism services. Remember that.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Oh, Speaker, this is too rich. This is far too rich.

I was happy to sit and participate in a lovely conversation about the throne speech, and then the minister goes on about how great they are with parents and with children. Please. I was the critic when your minister had to be replaced because of the challenge and the changes that were being made as a result of the autism file. Don’t tell us that you have respected children and parents with autism. You did nothing for them, and you know—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): It’s never too early to warn anybody, okay?

I’m going to return to the member from Dufferin-Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: A quick reminder, Speaker: Do you remember that hashtag, #autismdoesntendat5? Do you know why they did that? Because you guys were going to eliminate all of the access, all of the resources that were going to happen as a result of it. #autismdoesntendat5: That is a result of your decision and your government, so please do not tell me that the individuals and the families who are trying to get services in the province of Ontario were well served by your government. They weren’t. The minister was replaced. You actually had to back-step on that decision because the parents ended up having to rally in front of Queen’s Park every week and say, “You’re doing the wrong thing.” You should be ashamed of yourself for even suggesting that you have any ability to talk about autism and offering services to the parents in the province of Ontario—ridiculous.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France G  linas: It is always very interesting to hear a member of the Liberal government talk about the speech from the throne and talk about what their aspira-

tions are going to be for the next four years. But we all know, Speaker, that actions speak louder than words and that past action is a very good indicator of what future actions are going to be like.

Let me tell you what past action looks like. It looks like a government that doesn’t say beep about privatizing Hydro One during an election campaign. But the minute that they get elected, they sell away a public asset that has been ours for over 100 years. They privatized it. They continued what the Conservatives had done. The Conservatives were wise enough not to privatize Hydro One, but the Liberals did it.

Under their mandate, they talk about how important it is to continue with our health care system based on needs, not on ability to pay, and that this is the greatest public system we have. But under their leadership, we have seen the privatization of the health care system like we had never seen before. You can go into any community throughout our province and you will see private clinics that were never there before. They starved their hospitals and then told them, “If it’s not acute hospital care with nursing, it is okay to send it to the community.” But what the Liberals were really saying is that it is okay to privatize it.

There are very few outpatient physiotherapy clinics left in our hospitals. They are in the community and they are for-profit clinics. If you have the means, you can pay, but for most people, it’s out.

If you look at colonoscopies, if you look at angiograms, cardiograms—all of these things have all been sent—

Interjection: In vitro.

M^{me} France G  linas: In vitro—all of these things have been sent to the community, to the private sector—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I’m so delighted to stand up and also add my voice to the throne speech debate.

I have to say that I have to take exception to what the member from Timmins said, because the fact is, Madam Speaker, that this government has overseen the biggest expansion of public health care through OHIP+. Almost one in two Ontarians now have pharmacare in Ontario. That is the single-largest expansion of public health care in Ontario. To suggest, as the member from Nickel Belt did, that somehow under our watch we are privatizing, that is completely not acceptable. There are myths and there are facts.

The other thing that I want to say is that I am so proud of our throne speech, because what our throne speech really did was celebrate everything that we have done over the past three and a half years, and it also indicated what we want to do for the next four years. One of the things that the throne speech makes very, very clear is that we want our Ontario not only to be inclusive, but also caring, and that we care about our middle class.

The biggest takeaway for the residents of Mississauga East-Cooksville from this throne speech is that this government solidly stands up for all Ontarians and especially the middle class. They are—what would I say?

Interjection: The backbone.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: —the backbone of our province. They work hard and they pay taxes. What this throne speech has clearly indicated is that we are on their side. We are on the side of the middle class, because I'm a middle-class person myself, as are many of my colleagues. So we know the aspirations. We know the aspirations of those who want to get into the middle class—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's always a great pleasure to be able to stand in this House and engage in some verbal dialogue and a little bit of back and forth with government members and various members in this House.

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Madam Speaker, I haven't been here that long in the Ontario Legislature. I've been here about a year and four months. I've had the opportunity over that time to get to know the Attorney General a little bit here and there and have a couple of conversations, as well as the Minister of Children and Youth Services. I have a lot of respect for both of these fine gentlemen and the work that they put into representing their communities, and for their perspective in attempting to better Ontario. I don't want to discredit that. But I must say, I don't know how they can stand there in good conscience and say one thing while doing the total opposite. Particularly I find it quite amusing to listen to the Minister of Children and Youth Services speak about debt and deficit. I could tell it was difficult for him to keep a smirk off his face when he was referencing the so-called fiscal responsibility that the Liberals have.

I think it's fair to say that if we actually go out there and talk to people who are being impacted by the Liberal government—especially young people. It's been interesting. I get to travel to a lot of colleges and universities, and there are more and more and more young people joining the Conservative Party and joining the conservative movement. When I ask them what some of the reasons are, one of the big reasons is their concern about the debt that they see creeping up. I mean, \$11 billion in interest rate payments just here in the province of Ontario alone—and this is with historically low interest rates. That's a lot of money that could be going to health care, that could be going to education, that could be going into providing autism services as well.

The minister might not want to recognize it, but I can see that he understands the type of hypocrisy that's being brought forward himself, and I think he regrets it as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the Minister of Children and Youth Services to wrap up.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank you for chairing today and thank everyone for their comments.

The Conservatives have brought up autism services. They've talked about autism services. The member from Dufferin—Caledon, I believe it is, spoke to this and so did the last member. I've been contacted by parents who

have children with autism and they have personally thanked me and this government for the work that we've done in order to transform the entire system.

Earlier, I said if you really want to understand the true nature of a political party, just look at the members. But maybe you should just look at the leader himself. They've gone through five leaders in the last three and a half years, so there's been complete chaos over there. They finally agreed that they've got a leader. Their previous leader, when it comes to autism services, said that he didn't believe in a national strategy. He actually voted against that national strategy. Now you have a leader who had autistic children living in his neighbourhood and he told them to go to hell. Am I allowed to say that, Madam Speaker? He told them to go to hell.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order. The minister needs to withdraw the remark.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I withdraw it twice, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the minister.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Their current leader, the leader of the Progressive Conservatives, said that the autistic children in his neighbourhood were ruining his neighbourhood. You tell me I should be ashamed of what I say? How can you stand there and defend his record?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? I recognize the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. Minister of Children and Youth Services, you have now been warned. It's never too early. I already indicated that.

I return to the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I must say that hearing the government sound like an opposition is quite satisfactory. They are preparing themselves for the opposition benches very well. I'm glad to see that the important Westminster tradition and parliamentary task of holding the government accountable and responding to legislation and issues—I can see that members on the opposite benches are getting themselves ready to engage in that task, which is an honourable one, and one I'm sure the voters of Ontario will be happy to give them on June 7. I look forward to seeing them sitting on this side of the aisle come June 8.

The reality is that we had a throne speech. I know the discussions over the last few minutes in this House have been quite heated and perhaps distracted us a little bit from what we were talking about earlier, the issue at debate today. What we are debating, of course, is the throne speech that was brought forward by this government on Monday. I have the opportunity now to rise and speak to it.

Before I do, I want to set a little bit of a background. This custom of presenting a throne speech before the beginning of a session to indicate your government's prior-

ities heading into a legislative session is a long-standing one, and one that is admirable. I find it really interesting that we've seen so many—I think this is the third throne speech now from this government in the space of the last four years. I'm not sure if it's that they're a bit rudderless; perhaps they're not sure where they're going so they're changing directions, they're changing their minds about what their intentions are. We've even seen some of the language, really, shift and change—

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Rudderless.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member from Barrie is now warned.

I'll return to the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate it.

As I was saying, we've even seen some of the language shift and change. I'm not sure if that's because they're still trying to figure out what they can mess up—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The minister responsible for seniors is now warned.

I'll return to the member from Niagara West.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: What can I say? This is a good morning exercise for me. I get to sit down and stand up again.

One of the really concerning set of side effects that this throne speech has had, though—and I'll get into talking about the throne speech itself in a minute. For me, one of the real downsides was a personal issue and a personal matter. That had to do with the first private member's bill that I ever brought before this House. That was Bill 182, the Compassionate Care Act.

Applause.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you.

When the Compassionate Care Act was brought forward last December, with a lot of support from stakeholders, whether it was from the Ontario Medical Association, Hospice Palliative Care Ontario, or the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario, it was seen by all in this House at that time to be an important piece of legislation that would help improve the lives of Ontarians and provide choice in end-of-life care for Ontarians. It received unanimous support in this House, and I was very, very happy to hear that.

Mr. James J. Bradley: They all do.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: The member from St. Catharines says that they all do. I'm not sure if that's a statement on the good job that the government has had in collaborating with opposition members or not.

I think the government should take it seriously. When the Legislature indicates its intentions, when the Legislature indicates that this piece of legislation is something that has full support, I think it's perhaps shameful if we pass legislation and assume that it's going to die on the order paper; if we assume that we're going to prorogue the House and call for a throne speech in order to wipe the slate clean. I don't think that's what's intended when members unanimously support a piece of legislation.

For me, I wanted to give a little bit of background to the disappointment that I felt when this throne speech was called by erasing some very good legislation that was on the order paper. I even think of other members in this House, such as the member for Sarnia—Lambton, who had excellent work on PANDAS that he was doing as well that got erased.

The government now has brought forward this throne speech, where we're going to spend quite some time debating it and talking about it and the reasons behind it. I'm not sure why they're not willing to continue on with the legislation that they had on the table in the first place. Perhaps they're scared of Bill 175, the policing act, and some of the concerns that have been raised. I'm not sure if there are various issues that they had with the legislation that was being tabled in their own party. I do know that in my riding of Niagara West—Glanbrook there's a lot of cynicism towards the Liberal government. There's a lot of cynicism towards the reasons behind this.

We see the Premier out today on the third day of a campaign-like tour. That's what the media is calling it.

1010

Interjection: On the taxpayers' dime.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: On the taxpayers' dime, as my honourable colleague so aptly puts it—walking around the province, handing out money, left, right and centre, acting as if, 15 years later, having not made the adequate investments, having not shown fiscal prudence time and time again, and now at the 11th hour—in fact, the 11th hour and 59th minute, we could practically call it—it's okay to come around and act as if this saviour, this Liberal government, is going to come and save us from our woes.

Interestingly enough, listening to the throne speech, you wouldn't have thought that the Liberals, from their perspective, had had 15 years in government to help “build Ontario up.” Was that not a favourite slogan of the Liberal government earlier, I believe, before I was here? “Building Ontario up,” that was a phrase they liked to throw around. But if you listened to the throne speech, you got the distinct impression that the Liberal government had actually done more damage to the province of Ontario, that Ontarians were struggling and were really, really worried about the people in Ontario being able to get ahead.

It's interesting because, when I heard that throne speech, I was actually drawn to their federal counterpart. My mind went to Justin Trudeau and his 2015 election where he was walking up an escalator, talking about how this is how some Canadians feel. When I listened to the throne speech, I got that very same impression about where Ontarians are. It was rather fascinating because this is after 15 years of the same Liberal government that claims to be building Ontario up and that is now saying, “Well, Ontario is in such a horrible place, we really need to call a new throne speech and need to save people from themselves.”

There is a lot of work that needs to be done. I'll be the first to admit it. I'll be the first to say that I'm happy to

be part of a team that's running to replace this tired, sad government with a vibrant voice for people of all backgrounds, not just the well-connected insiders. It's easy for people like the minister of family and child services to stand up and say, "Oh, the opposition doesn't think Ontario is doing so well." Well, the reality is, maybe there are Ontarians who are doing very well, and that's excellent. I think that's commendable. But are the Ontarians who are doing well those who are well-connected insiders in the Liberal Party? Yes, those Ontarians are doing well. Liberal insiders are doing fine. They're getting good contracts. The Gandalf Group is happy.

But the reality is, Madam Speaker, that there is a lot of Ontarians, especially in rural and remote communities and northern communities, who are concerned about their future. They're concerned about whether it's skyrocketing debt or whether it's the rise of precarious unemployment.

One of the big reasons I got involved in politics is because my peers, coming out of universities that this government has been funding for the last 15 years, can't find jobs, or if they can, they're finding precarious employment. They can't buy a home; they can't own a home. I have friends, I have family who are looking to start a family, who are looking to venture out, get their first home, get married maybe and have children, but the reality is that affordability has become such a crisis here in the province of Ontario. Whether it's seeing hydro rates go up 300%, whether it's being one of the highest-taxed jurisdictions in North America, 53.5%—I think next only to 54% in New Brunswick—these are the types of numbers that have led to a despair in certain parts of the population, a despair among people who feel they can't get ahead.

I don't expect a lot from this government, but I look forward to seeing what they plan on doing.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Seeing as it's 10:15, I will be recessing the House until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to welcome some fantastic medical students who are here. I want them to stand up because I want you to see these fantastic medical students that are here today. We have Sydney McQueen, director of education for the Ontario Medical Students Association. Vivian Ng just left; she's the co-chair. We have Bushra Khan, who is communications director; Laurel Collings and Christina Schweitzer from the Canadian Federation of Medical Students; as well as Heena Kapoor, who is a representative. Thank you so much for coming down, girls.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It gives me great pleasure to welcome Jean Lim O'Brien, my constituent from Toronto–Danforth, to the Legislature. I hope you enjoy it, Jean.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I am happy to introduce the family of Humza Aziz, who is our page captain today, from Guelph, of course. His father, Suleman Aziz, is here; his grandparents Falahat and Iftikhar Sheikh; and his other grandmother, Rukhsana Aziz. Welcome.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: It's my pleasure to introduce friends of the Trillium Party of Ontario, Beverly Brooks and Daniel Kahan, who are here for the presentation of a private member's bill written by Daniel to provide loans backed up by a person's private life insurance policy.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I would like to welcome some guests from Windsor. I have Karen Waddell and her daughter, Samantha Waddell—they're from the House of Sophrosyne in Windsor—and Lady Laforet and Kristin Douglas from the Welcome Centre Shelter for Women and families.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's a great pleasure to welcome guests on behalf of the Retired Teachers of Ontario, in celebration of their 50th anniversary. Please join me in welcoming Muriel Baubeau-Howden, Judith Bowden, Martha Foster, Richard Goodbrand, James Patrick Grieve, Marie Estelle Louise Guérin, Graham Martin Higgs, Simon Leibovitz, Richard Prophet, Helen Szydlowski and Heather Wilson-Boast. Thank you, and welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: On behalf of my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka, I'm honoured to welcome the family of page captain Sophia Andrew-Joiner: mother Cynthia Andrew, father Shawn Joiner, and brother Nicholas Andrew-Joiner. They are here this morning to watch their family member.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I am pleased, on behalf of my page captain from Mississauga–Streetsville, Medha Gupta, to welcome her parents, who today are in the members' east gallery. Please join me in welcoming Navin Gupta and Garima Gupta.

Ms. Catherine Fife: We have some Cape Bretoners in the House today. I want to introduce my good friend, my best friend, Debbie MacLean; her husband, Jim MacRury; and their good friend Meghan O'Keefe. And we have Katie Buckland here, who is the first female pipe major in the Canadian forces. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to introduce two guests from my riding of Oakville who are here with us today: Diane Burton, a long-time local champion for environmental protection, and Patricia Bolton, who has just recently retired from a long career in the public service, most recently at the Treasury Board Secretariat. Please welcome them to Queen's Park, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like to introduce Ferg Devins in the members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to welcome Paul Kossta from OSSTF to the Legislature. I haven't seen him here for a few days.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It gives me great pleasure to introduce page captain Rachel Lewars from the great riding of Davenport, and to also welcome her mother,

Yvette Munro, who is joining us here today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'd like to welcome a couple of guests from the great riding of Northumberland—Quinte West, specifically my municipality of Brighton: Ann and Dave Graham. Welcome.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Also here in the House today is Suzanne McAllister, the president of the Ontario Liberal women's Tuesday lunch group. This is a group of women who, every Tuesday once a month for the past 70 years, join to talk about politics in the province of Ontario. She's joined by Hilda Mamann and Ana Ramirez, among many other women. Welcome.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'd like to extend a warm Queen's Park welcome to Paul Devlin and all the members from district 34 of the Retired Teachers of Ontario, representing York region. Today they're celebrating 50 years of advocacy for retired teachers and education workers. Welcome, congratulations, and thank you for your years of service.

Ms. Deborah Matthews: I am delighted, on behalf of the Premier, to introduce a remarkable group of women who are very politically engaged. It's called the Tuesday luncheon club—celebrating their 70th anniversary. Please welcome Suzanne McAllister, Esra Ozer, Sharon McCarthy, Rosemary Sobanski, Sally Kelly, Roxana Roberti, Donalda Wright from London, Sandy Brown, Evnur Taran, Magda Gondor, Madeline Torok, Diane Thomas, Hilda Mamann, Ileana Onose, Ana Ramirez, Emanuela Mousley and Teresa Barrotti. Welcome, and thank you for your years of advocacy.

VANDALISM OF SYNAGOGUE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean—Carleton on a point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Speaker: I know members are aware that there was vandalism at a synagogue, Chabad Flamingo, yesterday in Thornhill. On behalf of all of my colleagues in the Ontario PC caucus and, I expect, all of my colleagues here in the Ontario Legislature, I just want to say that our thoughts and our prayers are with Rabbi Kaplan. And thank you to the York Regional Police.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just before we start question period, I'd just remind all members that there have been some warnings laid this morning. They do get carried over into question period.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Warnings can be given out immediately, before questions start. And they do get carried over into the afternoon.

It is time for question period. The member from Nepean—Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker. I just want to point out that I wasn't in the House this morning so there's no carry-over for me at this particular point.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PROVINCIAL DEFICIT

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is for the Acting Premier.

On May 2, 2017, a wise man once said, "But the first way to address debt is to balance the books. We're balancing this year, next year and the year after that and we're lowering debt to GDP over the long term." Guess who said that, Speaker? The Minister of Finance.

What happened? Why is this government backtracking and breaking their promises? Are they really that desperate in the lead-up to this election?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I'm very pleased to answer on behalf of the Minister of Finance. I know that if he was here he would say that we're really proud to balance the budget this year. In fact, we will be bringing forward a budget that will show a surplus. That has happened because of the hard work this government has done in making sure that we are spending our money wisely on important services like health care and education; because our economy is growing, creating more jobs. It is one of the most booming and hottest economies in Canada and North America. That is because Ontarians are seeing unprecedented employment rates. We'll continue to build on that success.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: If he believes what he just said, I've got a gas plant in Mississauga to sell him.

1040

Another member across the aisle once said this: "There was not an issue that resonated more with constituents than the foolish spending of their hard-earned money.

"I remember being at one doorstep. It was a modest home. The people worked hard for what they had. They asked me to remember them if I got elected and ... governed. They said, 'Please remember us. Please remember that when you spend money, you are spending our money.'" That was the former Deputy Premier and an architect of that Liberal government. She didn't remember them. None of them remembered them, and we now we have, at minimum, an \$8-billion deficit to inherit.

When did they forget that they were spending that family's money and every other Ontarian's money?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: To the Minister of Economic Growth and Development.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It's an interesting question coming from the member from Nepean. I think the most salient point in her question was the notion of how important it is for us to remember. I think everybody in this Legislature and, frankly, all 13 million people right across this province clearly remember the kind of devastation that was levelled on health care and on education, and the havoc that was wreaked on municipal governments in their local decision-making autonomy.

The fact that subway lines were literally killed and filled in, the fact that significant public assets like High-

way 407 was tolled and then sold to a foreign consortium—everybody in this province has a very clear understanding and a very clear memory for exactly what it meant the last time reckless decisions were made by Conservatives when, unfortunately, they had power.

Our government is different. We do not believe in cutting. We believe in building. We believe in caring. We believe in supporting the people that we're proud to represent.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The member opposite—the minister—is bankrupting this province. If we want to talk about memories of the last 15 years, we could talk about hallway health care. We can talk about the highest hydro rates in North America. We can talk about closing schools, if that's where he wants to go.

But I'm going to continue with the former Deputy Premier's words. She said: "It's just outrageous to me that governments spend money on what are, in essence, political pieces...."

"I'm proud to be part of a government that will address the situation...."

"Let us remember the taxes they are paying, the money we are taking from them to spend wisely for them, not for us."

Wow, how times have changed over the last 15 years. They have forgotten who they are. They don't care about the people of Ontario anymore. They have clearly left us with at least an \$8-billion deficit. They are not spending the money wisely for the people. Isn't this spending just for your own political priorities and not for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: What a short memory they have on that side. Let's talk about how times have changed over just the last couple of months. It's so unclear to those of us on this side—in fact, I would tell you that it's unclear to the people of Ontario: Where do Ontario's Conservatives stand on key issues?

We know that over the last number of months they've talked about how perhaps they would run a deficit; perhaps they would balance. Their newly minted leader—I think he took all of three minutes to reverse himself four times on the question of whether or not he would balance his books.

Just yesterday, the member who's asking this question was unclear about whether, under their new platform heading into the election campaign, they continue to support investments in, for example, mental health.

We have no clue at this point in time if they would balance or what they would invest in, but we do know, because past practice does indicate future behaviour, what Conservatives do when they get the chance: They cut. They cause havoc. They destroy lives, and they do not build. We will not let that happen on our watch.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Listening to the round, we're in warnings.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would the member like a warning?

New question.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is again to the Acting Premier, but I wanted to address that last point. The Ontario Progressive Conservative Party built this province; the Ontario Liberal Party has broken this province.

Under Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals, hydro rates have tripled. In fact, families pay \$1,000 more per year than they did in 2003, when they took office. This government simply does not care about the people, and they certainly haven't been fair to the people of this province who are struggling between heating their home and eating food. There are still families that are making that difficult choice in this province.

Is this the legacy the government of Ontario wants to leave, the fact that they are forcing people between heating and eating?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: It's quite a recollection of events that the party opposite has of when they were in government, because if they call shutting down schools all across the province as building the province up and if they call shutting down hospitals—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned. The member from Simcoe–Grey is warned. The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: If they call shutting hospitals all across the province as building the province up and if they call cutting welfare rates by 22% as building the province up, that's quite a legacy, Speaker.

And then, on top of that, they left a \$5.6-billion deficit. If that is their definition of building Ontario up, no thank you. We do not want to go back there again. We've seen that movie before. We need to build this province up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You want to talk about a movie? This is a nightmare, watching you guys with the tiller. I'm telling you something, Speaker. That's why 2,000 people showed up to see Doug Ford on Monday night. They want fairness.

Premier Wynne and the Liberals have accepted \$1.3 million in donations from companies who received energy contracts. That meant these insiders resulted in families overpaying by \$9.2 billion on their hydro bills. Then, to make matters worse, the Wynne Liberals sold off Hydro One. It was a fire sale that rewarded their donors, insiders and fat-cat friends. That's why this government cannot be trusted anymore to do anything that is right or fair for the people of Ontario.

Doug Ford has said he will reduce hydro rates even further. Why won't this government do what Doug Ford wants?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Minister of Economic Development and Growth.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It's adorable to watch the member across talk about Doug Ford and the crowd that showed up to see him. I'm guessing those individuals that showed up fully expected, as they should, given that party's track record and their new leader's track record, that they were heading out for a night to watch a slasher flick. That is exactly what that party and that particular new leader—a leader, I would suggest, notwithstanding the bluster that we hear in that question, that that party is just a little bit nervous about. We know fully that most on that side didn't support his leadership campaign.

In particular, as our Minister of Energy mentioned just the other day, I think it's really important that, back on March 5, a leading member of Ontario's Conservative caucus said what every single Ontarian fully understands: "With his erratic and out-of-control behavior, I worry that if Doug [Ford] was to lead our party, he would lead us to certain defeat."

I will say—

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Who said that?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: That would be the member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

I will say, as a proud Ontarian, if Doug Ford ever takes over the leadership of this province, we are doomed.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. I'm disappointed. We're heading down a path that I don't think anyone wants to go down and anyone wants to hear.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I just want to address something. Would the minister call one of his male colleagues "adorable," and does he think that's appropriate? Will he apologize to me?

The government's own internal documents and the Auditor General have confirmed that if the Liberals are re-elected, Ontario's electricity rates will skyrocket to the highest that they have ever been. They can't be trusted. They don't care. They are too glib to continue governing this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, the question is simple: Why doesn't this government support long-lasting and real relief for hydro customers across Ontario? Or are they still only concerned with trying to eke out an election win in less than 78 days?

Mr. James J. Bradley: Bring back coal.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The chief government whip is warned. Minister.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, I would first say to the member asking the question that if I said anything that was taken the wrong way or that was offensive, my apologies. It wasn't intended to be delivered that way. I apologize for that.

What I would say, and I want to echo what I did say in the House the other day about this: I think it's perfectly appropriate for leaders of political parties and for political

parties to have very strong views about what they should do with the future of the province if they aspire to become the Premier.

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But I think that in 2018 there is a core responsibility that aspiring Premiers have, and that responsibility is to have the courage of their convictions and to level with the people of Ontario. I think it's clear—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, as I was saying, I think it's abundantly clear that, as we've seen so far, neither any member of Ontario's Conservative caucus or their newly minted leader, Doug Ford, have the courage of their convictions to level with the people of Ontario and freely admit what kind of damage you would do, who you would hurt, who you would harm and what public services you would eviscerate if you have the chance to form government. I don't think it's too much to ask for you to have the courage and admit exactly what kind of damage you will do should you form power.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you. New question.

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Acting Premier. Mohammad Akbar is a 27-year-old Torontonian who is currently working on a three-month contract. He has no health care benefits, no dental plan at all. His wisdom teeth are bothering him, and he knows they need to come out, but he can't afford to pay out of pocket for the procedure.

Dental care is one of the basics. Why hasn't the Premier or her Liberal government done anything in their 15 years in power to help people like Mohammad?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member for the question. I want to say, Speaker, that our government recognizes that to ensure fairness and opportunity for all Ontarians, there is an important role for the government to play in supporting access to oral health care for vulnerable people. That is why, over the years, we have been working hard in strengthening the Healthy Smiles program. That program has been expanded. It provides free, preventive, routine and emergency dental services for children and youth from low-income households across the province. In fact, this program is helping more than 470,000 kids access important dental services, and this number continues to grow.

We started with children and youth, as evidence suggests that oral health problems are more prevalent among low-income families, with children being most vulnerable, but we know there is more to be done. I look forward to addressing that in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Acting Premier: Mohammad grew up in a low-income household. He

started working young to help out his family and to save for school. When he was 18, he had an accident on a construction job and he broke one of his front teeth. Mohammad wasn't able to get his tooth repaired properly for eight years.

Why has the Premier left people like Mohammad to struggle in pain with no dental care for so long?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: As we reaffirmed in the speech from the throne, our government will be making investments to ensure that more people without a drug or dental benefits plan will have access to more affordable prescription drugs and dental care. We recognize—and we have heard those stories from people like Mohammad as well—that it's important that they have access to prescription medication and that they have access to good dental care. That is why we—and we appreciate the ideas brought forward by the third party—are looking at ways to make those types of programs available. That is why we have been working with the same advocates in our community to get ideas on how best to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again back to the Acting Premier: Mohammad says that he suffered terrible self-esteem problems as a result of his front tooth being damaged for so long. He says the NDP dental plan will mean a significant improvement in his health and well-being. The plan will ease his anxiety.

Why has the Premier done nothing in her time in office to ensure that young people like Mohammad don't suffer lasting emotional and physical pain because they can't afford to go to a dentist?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Our government has been focused on strengthening and building our health care system, making sure that it is available to people, that it is a publicly funded system that is available universally across our province. That is why we have continued to invest in good primary health care, so that more and more Ontarians have access to a family doctor a nurse practitioner or to their local community health centres, to get good health care.

That is why, Speaker, just like was announced today, we're continuing to invest in our hospitals so that there is good capacity and good care available through our hospitals. That is why we are expanding the OHIP+ program, a program that's the first of its kind in North America. It is making sure that children and youth till the age of 25 have access to free medication, and it will expand to include our seniors 65 and above in age as well.

These are important building blocks, Speaker. These are important investments to create a health care system that is truly universal in nature. This government, under the leadership of our Premier, has been working hard in accomplishing that.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. Jason Miller and Holly Lumley live in London West with their five-year-old daughter. Shortly after their daughter

was born, Jason and Holly were in a serious car accident, leaving them unable to work. Their total family income is just over \$2,000 a month, which makes them ineligible for ODSP, but their combined prescription drug costs are approximately \$3,500 a month. This means they do not fill most of their prescriptions because they simply cannot afford to.

Speaker, why does this Liberal government not care about the high cost of prescription drugs for families like Jason and Holly's?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member opposite for the question because I think she's making the point exactly why our government has chosen to develop OHIP+. That is exactly why our Premier absolutely has been a champion—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton Mountain is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, our Premier has been a champion on the national front in urging the federal government and all provinces and territories that we need a truly national pharmacare program. But we just didn't want to stop there. We wanted to start on that work right here in our province.

On this side of the House, we are really proud to introduce OHIP+, a first-of-its-kind program that provides free medications, no copayments and no deductibles, to all our children and youth through the age of 25. That is 4,400 prescription medications available free, just by showing your OHIP card. That is a first-of-its-kind program, and we're expanding that program to include our seniors as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Not only are Jason and Holly going without the prescriptions they need, they are also going without dental care. Since cleanings and checkups must be paid out of pocket, they don't go to the dentist. A couple of years ago, Jason required emergency dental care for infected canines. He had to wait, in dire pain, in the dental office waiting room while his family and friends scraped together the money so he could pay for his treatment.

Speaker, why has this Liberal government done nothing for 15 years to enable families like Jason and Holly's to afford the medications and the dental care they need?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, as I was saying earlier, our government is very much committed to making sure that people have the care they need. That is why our government, under our Premier's leadership, has been steadfastly focused on strengthening our health care system by making investments in our hospitals, like the new announcement today of \$822 million of new investment. That's a 4.6% increase in base operating funding for our hospitals to allow for more capacity all across the province.

The announcement we recently made of investing \$2.1 billion over four years in mental health and addiction: Speaker, I cannot tell you what kind of impact that kind

of well-integrated and coordinated care is going to make in the lives of young people and people of all ages and backgrounds in Ontario who are suffering from mental health or addiction challenges.

These are all important steps in making sure that we have a strong universal medical health care system.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Almost 2.2 million Ontarians go without the medication they are prescribed by their doctor because they can't afford it; 4.5 million Ontarians go without dental care because they can't afford it. Jason and Holly are not alone in their struggle to pay for their family's basic medical and dental needs.

Instead of trying to close the gaps in Ontario's health care system over the last 15 years, we've seen a Liberal government that has doubled down on Conservative-style cuts and budget freezes, leaving families on their own.

Speaker, after 15 years of inaction, does this Liberal government seriously think that Ontarians will believe the promises they are offering now, only 77 days before an election?

1100

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, we're not just making promises; we are actually delivering on these very important commitments, such as OHIP+, which came into effect starting January 1. That covers free medication for all children and youth until the age of 25, absolutely for free. It's a first-of-its-kind program in Canada—in fact, in all of North America. That is something all members of this House should be very proud of.

Unlike the New Democratic Party, which put forward a plan that barely covers the 120 most popular medications—Speaker, that's not sufficient. That is not universal whatsoever. Our program covers all 4,400 medications that are on the list and, as we have said, we plan to expand that. All these things are going to be in the budget. We hope that the NDP will support such a progressive budget that is for the betterment of the people of Ontario.

PROVINCIAL DEFICIT

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Last May, in 2017, you said, "But the first way to address debt is to balance the books. We're balancing this year, next year and the year after that and we're lowering debt to GDP over the long term." That promise didn't even last a year. Not only are you running an at least \$8-billion deficit, you doubled down on Monday.

I think I've known the minister well enough to understand he would probably prefer to balance the books, so I want to know: What was his reaction when the Premier forced him to run a deficit? Was he upset?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Let me remind the member opposite, we in fact have slayed the deficit, we have balanced the budget, and now we have a surplus position. The first step in managing debt is to balance the books, as we have.

Now, going forward, there are some uncertainties. There are trade negotiations that are uncertain; there's the degree of interest rate and other matters before us.

We have 2% growth, year over year, coming forward. That's ahead of Canada and ahead of the G7. Ontario's economy is strong. It's that position of strength that is enabling us to look at other opportunities to stimulate even further growth.

Now, the member opposite may want to make those cuts. She may want to proceed to put people in harm's way, and our economic recovery. We choose differently, Mr. Speaker. We're investing in health care, we're investing in schools, we're investing in mental health and we're investing in the growth of our economy for the benefit of the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: If the minister is so proud of having slayed the deficit, why is he going to run at least an \$8-billion deficit in the lead-up to this campaign? They have tripled the debt under his watch. They have lost 330,000 manufacturing jobs. They have the highest hydro rates in North America. They are boasting of an \$8-billion-to-come deficit.

I want to know, is the minister embarrassed to walk down Bay Street, and would he like me to change his title from the Minister of Finance to the minister of debt?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The member knows that in this place we either refer to them as their title or their riding. The member will withdraw.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdrawn, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Let me remind the member again: The largest debt ever made in the history of Canada was under the Conservative government in the recent years. The largest deficit in history was \$60 billion by the Conservative government. In the last 40 years, they have only balanced the books—

Mr. John Yakabuski: And they fixed it within three years.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Hon. Charles Sousa: In the last 40 years, they've only balanced the books four times, one of which was bogus, Mr. Speaker.

We have a balanced budget. We are in a surplus position. We're going forward to make choices, deliberate choices, to invest in our economy and, more importantly, to balance the needs of the people of Ontario.

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to Acting Premier. There are 4.5 million people in Ontario who do not have dental coverage. That's an astonishing number. What's more shocking is that every three minutes in Ontario someone visits a doctor's office or emergency room for a dental problem.

In Windsor, over 700 people visited the Windsor Regional Hospital's emergency department for dental issues

last year. At a cost of at least \$314 per visit to the emergency department, visiting the hospital for dental pain not only increases wait times and overcrowding, but it's a major financial burden as well—only for the patient to be told that they need to see a dentist.

Windsor's Downtown Mission is building a half-million-dollar dental clinic, all from community donors, which will provide free services to address the overwhelming need.

We know that dental care is good social policy, but it's good fiscal policy, too. In the last 15 years, why didn't this Liberal government tackle the issue of dental care in Ontario?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: On this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we agree that good dental care is most important for Ontarians. That's precisely why we have invested in this regard. The expansion of the Healthy Smiles program we alluded to several times in this House over this last week.

We certainly know that having good oral health and a healthy smile can have positive impacts on a child's overall health, self-esteem and ability to learn, and so we are absolutely committed. It sounds like we're very much on the same page in this regard. Of course, those on social assistance, those most vulnerable, also have access to dental benefits.

I'm very pleased that apparently the third party has come to see the light. I don't recall this in their platform in 2014. I don't remember any comments in this regard. We've been working on this consistently for years and years.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Back to the Acting Premier: What the minister may not know is, I was a dental assistant who worked in an office where we actually helped children through the Healthy Smiles program. It is chronically underfunded and the wait-list is years long.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Start the clock. There is somebody over there who is warned and I would hope that they would not think that they could hide behind someone's head.

Finish, please.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Just as this Liberal government chose to ignore dental care for the past 15 years, they've devastated our health care system, too.

Last month, David Williams of Belle River had a heart attack in Florida. After two weeks of being told there were no beds back home in Ontario, he was forced to have bypass surgery in the US. When he returned home, he received a medical bill for almost \$900,000.

The reality is that while some hospitals in Ontario are overcrowded and patients are forced into hallways and bathrooms, there are other hospitals with empty beds going unused because there is no government funding. In

Windsor, we know Hôtel-Dieu Grace has 89 unused mental health beds alone due to lack of funding.

Will the Acting Premier admit this government has neglected the health and wellness of the people of this province for 15 years?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'm having a little difficulty relating this supplementary to the original question; however, we will continue to talk about what we have done with our health care system.

We have a world-class health care system. Earlier today I was with the Premier announcing what we are going to be doing in this budget in relation to hospital capacity issues. We will be investing \$822 million this year. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the audience in that auditorium at North York General, made up of some of our health care professionals and also family members and patients, was most appreciative. They understand that we are looking at the needs of the people of Ontario and we continue to build our health care system.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is for the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development. Earlier this year I was proud to stand with the minister in my riding of Barrie as this government released a stronger apprenticeship system for Ontario, the province's strategy to develop a system that provides end-to-end supports for apprentices and employers in response to the needs of the changing economy and workforce. Speaker, I was very pleased to see that five out of 12 of the apprentices were women.

In a rapidly changing global economy, Ontario must build a highly skilled, inclusive workforce to keep our competitive edge. The people of Ontario have always been our strength. Ontario's apprentices deserve a system that opens opportunities, connects them to good jobs and helps them gain the skills needed to be successful in their career.

Can the minister inform the House of the great work that this government is doing through the apprenticeship strategy to help all Ontarians adapt to change and achieve their goals?

1110

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you so much to the great member from Barrie for this question. I had the pleasure of doing my first announcement in this ministry with her in Barrie.

Speaker, as Ontario's economy continues to grow, this government is always thinking ahead by developing programs that keep us on the forefront of growth here in Ontario, meeting the needs of our people. That is why we've launched Ontario's Apprenticeship Strategy, a vision that we share with our apprenticeship partners and the many people looking to learn new skills and start an exciting career in the trades. I want to say thank you to my predecessor for all her work on this file.

Our vision for the future is an apprenticeship system that is easy to access, navigate and complete. It's a future where apprenticeship is valued and recognized as part of

our post-secondary education system. Working in the trades puts people on a path towards stable, good-paying and meaningful careers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'm thrilled about the work that is being done to strengthen the province's apprenticeship programs. I think it will make a real impact on people's lives.

I know that Ontario's Apprenticeship Strategy was developed following extensive engagement with partners in the apprenticeship system from all across this province, and that the strategy directly responds to what our ministry heard from over 1,000 people. We know that the province needs more people doing work in the skilled trades, which means we need more people completing these apprenticeships.

Would the minister provide the House with an update on what the province has done to increase the number of people looking to work in the skilled trades, and what we're doing to support them to complete their training?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you again to the wonderful member from Barrie. Our apprenticeship strategy focuses on five key areas of action that will help more people start and finish an apprenticeship. We want more people to be able to benefit from the rewarding career that they can find in the trades and, in fact, we have grown apprenticeship registrations from 17,000 in 2003 to more than 24,000 in 2017.

But we know that there is more work to do, so one thing we're doing is introducing a new Graduated Apprenticeship Grant for Employers, or GAGE, to offer financial incentives to businesses, not just when they take on an apprenticeship, but all the way through key milestones to completion of their training.

We are going to increase access for under-represented groups, offering additional financial incentives for employers who take on apprenticeships from groups such as skilled women, indigenous people, newcomers and people from diverse backgrounds. The modernization of the apprenticeship program is about ensuring that seamless pathways and the right supports are offered to apprenticeship employers and training delivery agents.

MINISTERS' COMMENTS

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is to the Minister of the Status of Women. What a day it's been for women in politics. We have the Minister of Economic Development and Growth calling my female colleague "adorable" in a demeaning and condescending manner.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: No, he did not.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Please finish.

Ms. Laurie Scott: And the Minister of Finance called the women behind him at an announcement today "eye candy." What is going on over there? How is this acceptable?

Hon. Harinder Malhi: To the Minister of Finance.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You can't even answer a question on women in politics? Good God.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean-Carleton is warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Somebody's got a "W" already.

Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, this morning we had the pleasure of being hosted by the hospital, and together with men and women of all ages we were standing there. We thanked them for their tremendous contribution to their service, to the hospital, to the individuals they care for in our society. We expressed that gratitude. I thanked them. They were of all ages, of all different cultures—both men and women.

The member opposite is insinuating something which is distasteful, because it's the men and women that we were congratulating, and we will stand with them always.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Well, Minister, you did say "eye candy." It's a condescending attitude like that of your male ministers that is shocking and appalling, and quite frankly, it's unacceptable. How can this government claim to support women when they use such demeaning language toward them? Will the minister apologize for the words that he did use this morning?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'm not going to apologize to the beautiful people who work so hard for this province and our country. They're doing hard work. They deserve to be congratulated, and that was what I was doing.

I take offence that the member opposite is insinuating something against that which I have held so dear: That's equality, respect for all ages and for all genders, including my wife and my two girls—and at that event was also me thanking my niece, Nicole Pacheco, who does tremendous work at that hospital. I take full offence.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you. New question.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Acting Premier. In Oshawa, there are more people waiting for long-term-care beds than there are existing beds. That's why my constituents, Mary Anne Follett and Stephen Hoar, came to my office in a state of hopelessness. Their mother, Anna, was sent to the hospital by her retirement home in early February, a home that could no longer meet her needs. After she received emergency hospital care, there was nowhere to send her. Anna is in limbo waiting in the ALC, or alternate-level-of-care unit, in the hospital. Her family has no idea when or if she will be able to leave. There is nowhere for her to go.

This government has allowed long-term-care wait-lists to balloon to a crisis state. When will this government take responsibility for the long-term-care crisis and start helping families like Anna's get the care that they deserve?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Of course, we have been addressing the issue that the member opposite is referencing. In fact, just recently, we have announced the opening of 5,000 new long-term-care beds over the next four years, as well as providing more than 15 million hours more of nursing, personal support and therapeutic care annually for residents in long-term-care homes. This is part of our 10-year plan.

We are really into long-term planning. This is a stark contrast, obviously, to the third party. We've never heard of any plan on their part to increase long-term-care beds. Our 10-year plan is to create more than 30,000 new beds over the next decade, and we're continuing to work with the long-term-care sector to determine exactly where those beds should be placed in our province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: This government has had 15 years to help seniors and families get the care that they deserve. Instead of a long-term-care plan, they have a long-term-storage solution. If they truly cared, they would have already fixed the wait-lists. Instead, they have only made them worse.

Liberal cuts and privatization, much like what we would see from Doug Ford and the Conservatives, have left Anna's family in an impossible situation. Her family is being told that if they want to get Anna into appropriate care before the end of the year, they would have to start looking far outside their community.

While she has been in the hospital, Anna has fallen, she has gone without any showers and she has watched her hospital roommate and other forgotten seniors die while waiting for a space in long-term care. Anna's family is terrified that she is also going to die in the hospital waiting in ALC, which is serving as long-term storage, not long-term care.

1120

How does this government justify years of gutting our health care system while families have nowhere to turn and seniors like Anna have nowhere to go?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Well, the member opposite perhaps just needs to be reminded of our throne speech earlier this week, wherein we talked about all the investments our government has made over the course of our being in government over the last 15 years, specifically for the vulnerable population that she is referring to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Of course, long-term-care homes are part of the picture. But our investments through the years in home care have been absolutely phenomenal, in my view. Since 2013, our government has increased funding for home and community care to

help those frail elderly stay where they would wish to stay for as long as possible—in their own homes—by some \$250 million a year. This is in addition to the government's ongoing funding of more than \$5 billion. Of course, our announcements in—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

LIFE INSURANCE

Mr. Jack MacLaren: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, today I will introduce a private member's bill that will amend the Insurance Act to allow life insurance policy owners to use their life insurance policy as collateral to obtain a loan. This will give life insurance policy owners the freedom to use their life insurance policy the same as any other properties they might own—properties such as land, buildings, stocks and bonds. All these properties can be used as collateral to obtain a loan. This is a fundamental right of a property owner; it is a right denied.

Minister, will you help us restore this property right to life insurance policy owners? Will you support our bill to amend the Insurance Act?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you to the member for the question. I know that the member for Eglinton—Lawrence also put forward a private member's bill to the same effect.

For those who don't know, we're talking about the sale of existing policies to third parties. It's something that has been prohibited in Ontario since the 1930s. Quebec has it now, and they're actually looking at retracting from it. Saskatchewan is looking at prohibiting it, so that only leaves two or three provinces now who are still allowing it to take place.

It's a financial instrument. We need to foster ways to protect consumers and investors. We've done so much more now to provide for those who are near death or are looking at providing for more supports in their elder years. That's why we take the steps that we have most recently, and upcoming in the budget. But we will look at this opportunity, and we'll address it as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Seniors Affairs. Minister, this bill will—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Regrettably, it has to be directed to the same minister. They have an option to move it to someone else. So keep it—

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'll send it to her.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ask the question, please.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I stand corrected. Minister, this bill will help seniors. It will allow seniors to borrow against their life insurance policy. Many seniors are struggling to make ends meet because of the high cost of hydro bills and cuts to seniors' services. This access to their wealth, to their cash, will help seniors to live without worry, without having to impose on their families and

without having to depend on government. They will be able to live with dignity.

It is time to give our seniors the freedom to use their wealth the way they want. Minister, will you help us to help seniors? Will you support our bill to amend the Insurance Act?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Minister of Seniors Affairs.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I want to thank the member opposite for this question. As the Minister of Finance outlined, this is a good idea. It certainly has some merit in helping people who want to access assets being able to access those assets. But also we're concerned about consumer protection, because the risk is that some vulnerable people might get caught in fraud or be forced to sell at a lower price.

We really need to balance innovation with consumer protections. I look forward to the introduction of this bill, which was introduced earlier last year by the member from Eglinton—Lawrence, and I spoke to it. I really look forward to debating this bill.

I want to assure the member opposite that we're not cutting services to seniors. If anything, we are enhancing services to seniors. Perhaps he missed the announcement earlier this week where we said we're expanding OHIP+ to all people over the age of 65.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My question is to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Today is World Water Day, a day to recognize the importance of protecting our most vital resource.

In Ontario, we're lucky our province touches four of the five Great Lakes. In my riding of Northumberland—Quinte West, seven of the eight municipalities border the shores of Lake Ontario, the majority of them relying on this resource for their drinking water.

We know that protecting this precious natural resource is an essential part of helping Ontario families and communities thrive, and we can't do it alone, Speaker. That's why the province is investing \$1.5 million in grants for projects that allow communities to participate in protecting and restoring the Great Lakes through the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund. Through this fund, we're enabling greater community participation in protecting the local watershed.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain to the House how the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund encourages Ontarians to protect and restore this important natural resource?

Hon. Chris Ballard: I'd like to thank the member from Northumberland—Quinte West for that very important question as we celebrate World Water Day today. I would start off by toasting you with a glass of tasty Toronto water, Speaker.

I'm delighted to take this opportunity to talk about the importance of protecting water here in Ontario. We know it is a valuable resource, and that's why we're helping communities take action to protect their local watersheds. Since 2007, Ontario has invested more than \$170 million

into 1,420 local Great Lakes protection projects that have reduced harmful pollutants, restored some of the most contaminated areas, and engaged hundreds of partners and community groups to protect and restore the health of the Great Lakes.

This includes one project that I'm particularly fond of, the Girls Can Too program in Caledon that empowers girls to learn about the environmental and skilled trades sectors. Through these programs, we're helping Ontarians take action in their communities to promote efforts to clean and protect the Great Lakes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you to the minister for that answer. We know how important it is to keep our environment healthy and safe for Ontarians. That's why we're investing in protecting our Great Lakes. Through the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund, over 37,000 volunteers have planted more than 285,000 trees and shrubs, released over 800,000 fish, built and enhanced 760 trails and collected more than 2,800 bags of garbage.

Speaker, can the minister please explain to the House how this government is further strengthening our water protection in this province?

Hon. Chris Ballard: I'd be delighted to, and I thank the member from Northumberland—Quinte West again for that important question.

The government has taken significant actions to increase water protection for the health of Ontarians and for the overall environment.

A few of the things we're doing, Speaker: We've updated standards to further protect our drinking water. We're taking action to reduce algae blooms in Lake Erie. We're introducing, and have introduced, stricter requirements for bottled water permits. We're strengthening water-testing requirements in schools. Our government takes our job to protect the environment very seriously.

What is shocking to me is that the PCs have walked away entirely from any credible plan to protect the environment. Just yesterday, Speaker, the member for Nepean—Carleton—

Mr. Rick Nicholls: What about water wells in Chatham-Kent?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Chatham-Kent—Essex is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Chris Ballard: The member from Nepean—Carleton couldn't answer a single question yesterday about how they would protect the environment if they were elected. Meanwhile, we've taken serious steps to protect both the water and the overall environment.

1130

MEDICAL GRADUATES

Mrs. Gila Martow: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I think the minister will agree that we must plan for Ontario's future health care needs. Part of this planning must ensure the adequate training of our future health care delivery professionals.

Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a bottleneck in the system, leaving many of our valuable medical school graduates unable to practise medicine. The problem stems from our medical school students not being able to match with a required residency program. Unlike the days when the minister attended medical school and I myself went through optometry training, all medical graduates must now complete a residency program to receive a licence to practise.

Will the minister agree that more should be done to ensure we fund medical students, many of whom are here today—and all female, I may add—who are able to treat patients?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: It's a pleasure to recognize those medical students who are with us today. I think if I had attended when I was a medical student, perhaps I would never have engaged in this particular profession as a politician, because question period, as they have seen, is an interesting place.

I know that the member opposite has introduced, I believe, a private member's bill or a motion in this regard. It is an important question. I certainly look forward to hearing the results of the debate later today.

We do know that the number of unmatched Ontario medical graduates has been increasing in recent years, and we recognize the challenges faced by those medical graduates who do not obtain a residency position through the matching process. We do take this issue very seriously. We're reviewing the outcomes of the matching process and we're working with relevant stakeholders.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Again to the minister: Our medical students are very concerned about graduating and not finding residency programs. In fact, the students of the Ontario Medical Students Association are here today to raise their concerns.

According to OMSA, the greatest issue they want government to address is unmatched medical school graduates and physician services planning. These medical students want to become doctors. They want to work at our hospitals and clinics. They want to collect patient data for research into new cures and treatments. Unfortunately, some of our brightest and hardest-working young adults are not getting a fair chance. The number of unmatched students is rising in part because this Liberal government reduced the number of residency program spots.

Later today I will be introducing a private member's bill to address the issue. Will the minister show her support for our future generation of physicians by committing to support the Careers in Medicine Advisory Committee Act?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'll certainly commit to working with our medical schools to support Ontario medical school graduates through the upcoming 2018 matching process and to develop effective, sustainable solutions to this issue.

I would like to point out that the matching process is Canada-wide, so it is important to note that this is actually a pan-Canadian process. It's a process where Ontario

medical graduates compete with graduates from other Canadian medical schools. We're going to be working with our provincial and national counterparts to better understand this issue. We will certainly do everything we can to ensure that every one of our medical students finds a place to practise in the future.

DENTAL CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Acting Premier. My constituent Amanda told us that she grew up without basic dental care because her parents didn't have a dental plan at work. They couldn't afford to pay for appointments with the dentist. Because of that, Amanda knows first-hand what a disadvantage it is to not have access to a dental plan.

Amanda is 28 years old. She can't work. She has lost most of her teeth and has recurring infections and debilitating pain. And now she has been told that she needs to have all her remaining teeth extracted and obtain dentures.

Why do this Premier and this government choose to prioritize selling off hydro instead of investing in a dental plan that would help Amanda and other Ontario families?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'd just like to remind the House that we did reaffirm in the throne speech that our government will be making investments to ensure more people without a drug or a dental benefits plan will have access to more affordable prescription drugs and dental care. Obviously, I think we're all waiting with anticipation to see exactly what that means in our budget.

What I do know is that we have been consistent in our ongoing investment in the health care of Ontarians since we took office 15 years ago. In particular, yet again, I would like to talk about our Healthy Smiles program. This is free preventive, routine and emergency dental services for children and youth from low-income households across the province.

In reference to the question posed by the member opposite, the case that she refers to, it sounds like she might qualify for dental benefits through our social assistance program.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, because Amanda is now receiving social assistance, she has been advised that the standard emergency care for adults is four extractions every six months. At this rate, it will still be more than a year before Amanda is out of pain and able to look for a job.

The NDP has a plan to help every Ontarian, from children to seniors, access dental benefits, either through work or a health card. No one should have to deal with the pain or lifelong damage of going without dental care.

Can this Liberal government explain to Amanda why they think it's fair to pay the CEO of Hydro One an executive salary of \$4.5 million while doing nothing to help families like hers over the past 15 years?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: We do recognize that there are adults and seniors who struggle with access to affordable dental care. That's why, of course, we do have existing publicly funded programs such as the Ontario Disability Support Program and benefits through Ontario Works that may provide coverage for those in need.

We did create, back in 2015, two working groups with the Ontario Dental Association to discuss this particular issue. On this side of the House, we want to consult, we want to listen and we want to get the best advice. As a result of those working groups, we continue to want to look to them, as we anticipate our budget, to ensure that the appropriate care reaches those who need it.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science. The human life sciences sector continues to be a priority sector for the government of Ontario. With 1,900 life sciences firms, our government and our people have worked hard to make Ontario the largest life sciences jurisdiction in Canada. As a matter of fact, Speaker, prior to entering politics, I had the opportunity to work in the pharmaceutical industry, so I know first-hand that, each day, our life sciences sector is working towards discovering new therapies and cures for various diseases.

Our government has a strong track record when it comes to investing in this sector, and we are committed to maintaining our global position. Can the minister please inform the members of the House how his ministry plans on further contributing to Ontario's successful life sciences sector?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member from Davenport for that very good question. Last month, in February, I was pleased to announce that our government is investing up to \$50 million in a new life sciences venture capital fund initiative. This will assist life sciences firms to leverage additional capital, helping them to access the resources they need to grow their businesses and compete globally.

These firms will foster new discoveries, technologies, treatments and cures for illnesses and diseases such as cancer, multiple sclerosis and diabetes. This will all be done while we are supporting high-quality jobs for people across our province of Ontario. Mr. Speaker, our government is always discovering new ways to support our people.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I want to thank the minister for that answer. This new venture capital fund will surely help Ontario retain its position among the 10 top venture capitals in North America.

It's important that we continue to invest in this sector so that we continue to discover new therapies and cures for various diseases. The minister spoke about diabetes, which was discovered right here in Ontario, in the city of Toronto.

Moreover, it will help create high-value jobs in a sector that already does so much to drive Ontario's economy. I understand that in recent activities, our government and your ministry have supported the sector through the establishment of the Office of the Chief Health Innovation Strategist and the life sciences working group.

Minister, could you inform the members of the House how our investments have contributed to Ontario's health care system and economy?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Again, thank you to the member for that question. Ontario's life sciences sector generates \$47 billion in revenue every year, \$9 billion in exports and employs over 60,000 with good jobs in our province in Ontario.

We support the life sciences sector in this province, and we want to see this sector continue to grow and flourish. This is why we established the Office of the Chief Health Innovation Strategist, as it works to support the medical technologies and enhance Ontario's health care system.

We have also established the life sciences working group which identifies barriers to this sector's progress and potential solutions. This will position our province of Ontario as the destination for global investments and talent in every sector of the economy.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound on a point of order.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like welcome Dr. Sy Eber. I noticed he's in the visitors' gallery and just wanted to say welcome to Queen's Park, Sy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Windsor-Tecumseh on a point of order.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to welcome some late-arriving residents from my riding—actually, former next-door neighbours. Steve Salmons and his wife, Beth, are here. They are here to help Liberal aide Meaghan Salmons celebrate a birthday today. Welcome back to Queen's Park, Steve, and happy birthday, Meaghan.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Meaghan Salmons works in my office in the government House leader's role, so I also want to welcome Steve Salmons and Beth Nikosey as we celebrate Meaghan's birthday today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There you go, double duty.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1141 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Arthur Potts: My guests are just making their way into the east gallery. We have with us today Diane Fraleigh and Carly Ferguson, who are here to support moving Kiska to an animal sanctuary in Nova Scotia. I'll be reading a petition about that later.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm pleased to welcome once again to the Legislature Laurel Collings from the Ontario Medical Students Association, as well as her friend Christina Schweitzer from the Canadian Federation of Medical Students. They're here to hear me make a statement on residency matching.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WORLD WATER DAY

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today and recognize World Water Day. It's a good opportunity to recognize the importance of protecting our environment and the vital resources we depend on, especially water.

I've often raised these concerns in this Legislature about a proposal that would put our water at risk. The proposal is to locate a landfill in Beachville on fractured limestone near the Thames River and close to the town of Ingersoll's main well.

I also want to take this opportunity to remind the Minister of the Environment and members of the Legislature about the bill I introduced, which would give municipalities the authority to approve the location of landfills in their communities, which the government killed by proroguing the Legislature. I will be reintroducing the bill later today.

Municipalities across Ontario could be forced to accept landfills. They don't have a real say, despite the significant impact on their communities. Nearly 30 municipalities have passed resolutions asking for this authority. A further 150 leaders have signed petitions demanding the right, and are in the process of passing similar motions in their own councils. Municipalities are demanding the right to have a say on landfills that affect their communities.

We respect local governments and the people who elected them, so we believe municipalities deserve landfill approval authority, especially when their water supply is at risk.

Today, as we celebrate World Water Day, I want to remind the government of the importance of protecting our groundwater and ensuring that our drinking water is not put at risk.

Thank you very much for allowing me to make this statement.

SPEAKER'S BOOK AWARD

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Mr. Speaker, by the way, your young page from Brant, Tatyana, said she really enjoyed your lunch today. She actually thinks you're a nice guy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, the young. They will learn.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Actually, Speaker, I have a couple of awards to speak about today. First, thank you for sponsoring your annual Speaker's Book Award. Congratulations to this year's winners, especially

Karolyn Smardz Frost for her book *Steal Away Home*, about slavery and the Underground Railroad.

I was overjoyed this year when three writers from Windsor were honoured.

My friend Patrick Brode is a lawyer with the city of Windsor. He has written extensively about our history. His latest book is *Border Cities Powerhouse: The Rise of Windsor: 1901 to 1945*. It's published by Biblioasis, a local firm I have mentioned several times in this House, especially around the Giller Prize.

Cheryl Collier is a professor in the political science department at the University of Windsor. She and Jonathan Mallory have written *The Politics of Ontario*, which is the first comprehensive book on Ontario's politics, government and public policy since 1997.

Our third author with Windsor roots is Shawn Micallef. His latest book is *Frontier City: Toronto on the Verge of Greatness*. Shawn grew up in Windsor. His mom still lives in my riding. These days he makes his living as a writer in Toronto, concentrating on issues of urban planning, and is a co-founder of *Spacing* magazine.

Windsor will be recognized on Monday for its work on the journey to become an age-friendly community. These communities are characterized by accessible and inclusive environments, both physical and social, that enable seniors to live independent, healthy, active, safe and socially connected lives. The award will be presented on Monday at the inaugural Age-Friendly Communities Symposium put on by the Ministry of Seniors Affairs.

SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

Mr. Yvan Baker: Many parents in my riding of Etobicoke Centre have expressed their concerns about the proposed boundary changes for Catholic high schools in our community. Currently, three Catholic high schools in Etobicoke—Michael Power, Bishop Allen and Father John Redmond—are over capacity. To relieve pressures on these three schools, the Catholic school board has proposed new catchment boundaries. If implemented, the proposal would result in children graduating from elementary schools in Etobicoke—in my community—being forced to attend schools outside the Etobicoke area, while schools in Etobicoke would be occupied by students from outside the community.

This is unacceptable to me, because there is currently enough room in those three high schools to accommodate all students graduating from elementary schools in my community of Etobicoke. That is why I've been advocating with the Catholic school board for a revised boundary proposal that would ensure local students from our community have priority access to our local high schools.

I've also been a strong advocate for an additional Catholic high school in Etobicoke to ease the pressure on these three crowded schools. Scarlett Heights Entrepreneurial Academy is a public high school owned by the TDSB which will be closing its doors at the end of this school year. I've been advocating with the TDSB and the

Catholic school board that the TDSB sell or lease the property to the Catholic school board as soon as possible. This would ensure that Scarlett Heights become a Catholic school, and that this could be done as soon as possible.

This is to me a common-sense solution that would keep the property in public hands and preserve the school and property for use by the surrounding community. Most importantly, it would add a Catholic high school in Etobicoke and ease pressures on the currently crowded high schools so that parents in our community who have children graduating from elementary schools can send their students to schools in our community in Etobicoke.

LIFE INSURANCE

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Today I will table a private member's bill that will amend the Insurance Act. It will allow life insurance policy owners to use their policy as collateral to obtain a loan. This will give life insurance policy owners the freedom to use their life insurance policy the same as any other property they might own—property such as land, buildings, stocks or bonds. All these properties can be used as collateral to obtain loans. This is a fundamental right of a property owner. It is a right that is currently denied.

Restoring this right will help anyone who has a life insurance policy. It will especially help senior citizens. Many seniors are struggling to make ends meet because of high hydro bills and cuts to seniors' services. Creating this access to their property, their wealth, their cash will help many seniors to live without worry, without having to impose on their families and without having to depend on government. They will have the pride of independence. They will be able to live with dignity.

It is time to give seniors the freedom to use their wealth the way they want.

MEDICAL GRADUATES

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm going to be moving forward with a private member's bill in just a few moments, and I just want to talk a little bit about it in the time that I have for a statement.

It's An Act to require the establishment of a Careers in Medicine Advisory Committee. We were joined today by some wonderful women who are medical school students. Some of them are still here with us today.

I just want to add to some of the remarks that we discussed this morning in our press conference. One is that the taxpayers are footing the bill to help train many of our medical students. They're burdened with debt, and the taxpayers are contributing very valuable taxpayer dollars in order to train our medical school students. How is it possible, Mr. Speaker, that we have so many medical school students who are unable to match in the province of Ontario? More needs to be done. That's why I'm moving forward with a private member's bill.

I want to just mention that I have not forgotten—and I believe that many of us have not forgotten—Dr. Robert

Chu, whose voice really did fall on deaf ears. I want to speak for him today, because he took his life after not matching two years in a row for a residency program. It's all very nice to offer counselling and resiliency training to our students who don't match, but that's just a band-aid, Mr. Speaker. We can do so much more.

Speaking on Dr. Robert Chu's behalf, as well as for all the medical school students who did not match in the first round—we know there's a second round, but unfortunately the international medical school students are able to put their names forward for that round. More needs to be done. It is a crisis.

1310

ELIJAH HENNESSEY

Mr. Michael Mantha: Just a short couple of weeks ago, we had the mining gurus of the globe coming to gather at the convention centre here in Toronto. The Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada came in to talk about mining, the experiences that they've had, the investment and the equipment. It was an exciting time, and I spent a very good portion of that week with them.

However, regretfully, I couldn't spend the entire week with them. I had another mining project, Mr. Speaker. The mining project was over at SickKids, believe it or not. I had my crew, with Darla and Howie Hennessey, along with mom and dad, who were Thomas and Jessie. We were opening up veins, but they weren't gold veins. What I saw was a miracle that happened over at SickKids. We opened up a vein to let blood flow to a little boy's heart; that's what we did. This little boy's name is Elijah. Elijah has been blessing the community of Elliot Lake as a miracle boy for a very long time—since Christmas.

Standing there looking at him and just looking at the struggles and the battle—we call him the "Little Bean." I refer to him as a little warrior. But it is amazing what has happened there. That little guy has inspired an entire community. You know what? We always look up to the skies in order to have our prayers answered, but when you look up to that sky in the skyline here in Toronto, you're also going to see SickKids, and that's where miracles happen.

ADAM LAKE

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: It is a privilege to speak in the Legislature today about a dedicated young man from my riding of Mississauga—Erindale who is a recipient of the 2017 Lincoln M. Alexander Award. Mr. Adam Lake exemplifies the sort of qualities that Ontario needs in its future community leaders. He is passionate about his community and the challenges they face, while also being earnest in all of his endeavours.

Organizations such as the LGBTQ youth hotline, BlaqOUT, Africans in Partnership Against AIDS, Black CAP and the Peel HIV/AIDS Network have all benefited from his intelligence, passion and dedicated activism. It

is also very impressive to know that at such a young age, Mr. Lake has already co-founded a non-profit organization called Books Breaking Barriers. This organization helps to empower Canadian prison inmates through the love of reading.

I had the pleasure of meeting Adam in my office. He's a very impressive young man and has a very bright future ahead of him. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Adam Lake for his dedication to helping create a more equal world and helping to inspire people and others to do the same. Adam, you are a fully deserving recipient of the 2017 Lincoln M. Alexander Award, and we thank you for your dedication.

HOSPICE CARE

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to rise to speak about Durham Hospice, as I've long been guided, Speaker, by the belief that how we care for each other at the end of life is as important as the beginning of our lives. Therefore, I'm pleased to lend my support to "Comfort, Care, Compassion," a \$15-million capital fundraising campaign to support the construction of two new residential hospices in Durham region and bring this much-needed resource to our community. It's a five-bed site in Clarington and a 10-bed site in Whitby, which will provide free and meaningful care in a supportive, flexible and home-like environment.

I'm highly impressed by the compassionate individuals from the region of Durham—practitioners, volunteers, administrators and community leaders from all levels of government—lending their time to the hospice fundraising campaign. Their passion and focus provide a solid foundation for the work that still needs to be done to reach the \$15-million target. After all, Speaker, a hospice is about caring, not curing, and the time to care in the region of Durham is now.

I'll close with a quote, Speaker, from the Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu, who once said that life and death are one thread—the same line viewed from different sides.

RETIRED TEACHERS OF ONTARIO

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I wish to congratulate the Retired Teachers of Ontario on the occasion of their 50th anniversary. The RTO is a diverse organization representing retirees from the public, French and Catholic school systems. Its mission is to improve the lives of its members and of seniors in general.

To this end, the RTO Foundation supports research into healthy aging, including funding a chair in geriatric medicine at the University of Toronto's medical school. The foundation also supports worthwhile community projects in Ontario and around the world, as well as provides scholarships for higher education.

Additionally, the RTO provides other important services for its members, including an insurance plan, pension support and social activities. For example, district 34 of the RTO, which represents former teachers

in York region, organizes annual trips to the theatre, horse racing and a golf tournament in support of the RTO Foundation. I know Janice Napp, president of Simcoe unit 17, works very hard on behalf of her members as well. In fact, the members of district 34 are hosting a celebration this afternoon in honour of their 50th anniversary, complete with a trivia contest and music from 1968.

As a teacher myself, I wish to congratulate the RTO on 50 excellent years, and thank them for their service to the community and all of Ontario.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that there are several people in this Legislature who, in the future, may be members of RTO.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I already am.

Final member's statement: the member from York-Simcoe.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to be able to rise today and add a little more to International Women's Day. Earlier this month, we celebrated International Women's Day, and today I want to acknowledge two special women in Ontario's history who have each blazed their unique trail in their respective fields.

It was on this day in 1884 that Elizabeth Lawrie Smellie was born in what was then Port Arthur, today known as Thunder Bay. After serving as a nurse in World War I, she became the chief superintendent of the Victorian Order of Nurses in Canada and a colonel in the Canadian army in World War II. She was the first woman in the Canadian Armed Forces to ever achieve this rank.

Years later, in 1928, Eileen Vollick of Hamilton became the first Canadian woman to obtain a pilot's licence.

Each of these remarkable women achieved great heights at a time when it was not the norm nor even something many would have considered. We are lucky to live in a time where a girl can set goals and where goals can be achieved. It is, in part, because of women like Elizabeth and Eileen.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements. It's therefore time for reports by committees. Real quick: reports by committees? Reports by committees?

Introduction of bills.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RESPECTING MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY OVER LANDFILLING SITES ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE RESPECT DES POUVOIRS DES MUNICIPALITÉS À L'ÉGARD DES LIEUX D'ENFOUISSEMENT

Mr. Hardeman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 16, An Act to amend the Environmental Assessment Act and the Environmental Protection Act to require support from municipal councils and band councils before establishing landfilling sites / Projet de loi 16, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les évaluations environnementales et la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement afin d'exiger l'appui des conseils municipaux et des conseils de bande avant la création de lieux d'enfouissement.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: The bill enacts the Respecting Municipal Authority Over Landfilling Sites Act, 2018.

A few weeks ago, I proposed this same bill, and the government killed it through prorogation of the Legislature. I am reintroducing it today—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Explanatory notes, please.

1320

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: The act amends the Environmental Assessment Act to provide that the minister shall not give approval to proceed with an undertaking in respect of a landfilling site within a municipality or on a reserve unless the municipal council or the council of the band, as the case may be, passes a resolution supporting the establishment of the landfilling site.

The act makes a similar amendment to the Environmental Protection Act with respect to the director issuing an environmental compliance approval in respect of the establishment of a landfilling site.

These amendments would show respect for municipalities by ensuring a landfill cannot be located in their community unless they have a willing host.

LONG-TERM CARE HOMES AMENDMENT ACT (PREFERENCE FOR VETERANS), 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES FOYERS DE SOINS DE LONGUE DURÉE (PRÉFÉRENCE ACCORDÉE AUX ANCIENS COMBATTANTS)

Ms. Forster moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 to give preference to veterans for access to beds / Projet de loi 17, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les foyers de soins de longue durée pour accorder la préférence aux anciens combattants qui veulent avoir accès à des lits.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Cindy Forster: The bill amends the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, to require the minister to ensure that preference in admission to long-term-care homes is given to veterans. The bill also amends the act by enacting a definition of “veteran” that includes former officers and former non-commissioned members of the Canadian Forces.

CAREERS IN MEDICINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE COMITÉ CONSULTATIF POUR LES CARRIÈRES EN MÉDECINE

Mrs. Martow moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to require the establishment of a Careers in Medicine Advisory Committee / Projet de loi 18, Loi exigeant la création d'un comité consultatif pour les carrières en médecine.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to remind everybody that we have too many medical school—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Explanatory notes, please.

Mrs. Gila Martow: —graduates who are not able to find residencies—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Explanatory notes, please.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I would like us to call on the government and all the representatives—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

A reminder before I continue: You are to read from the explanatory notes. Debate is another time.

ONTARIO FORESTRY REVITALIZATION ACT (14 STOREY WOOD FRAME BUILDINGS), 2018 LOI DE 2018 SUR LA REVITALISATION DE LA FORESTERIE EN ONTARIO (BÂTIMENTS À OSSATURE DE BOIS DE 14 ÉTAGES)

Mr. Fedeli moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 with respect to the height of wood frame buildings / Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment en ce qui a trait à la hauteur des bâtiments à ossature de bois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Ontario Forestry Revitalization Act (14 Storey Wood Frame Buildings), 2018: The bill amends the Building Code Act, 1992 to provide that the building code shall not prohibit a building that is 14 storeys or less in building height from being of wood frame construction. This does not prevent the code from imposing requirements on or prohibiting specified classes of wood frame buildings.

INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT (LIFE LOANS), 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES ASSURANCES (PRÊTS SUR L'ASSURANCE-VIE)

Mr. MacLaren moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 20, An Act to amend the Insurance Act with respect to life loans / Projet de loi 20, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances en ce qui concerne les prêts sur l'assurance-vie.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: The bill amends section 115 of the Insurance Act to provide for an exception to the current rule which prohibits any person, other than an insurer or its duly authorized agent, from trafficking or trading in life insurance policies. The prohibition does not apply to the assignment of a life insurance policy if the assignment is from the original policyholder or the policy is donated to a charity, if the policy has been held for at least 36 months and if other prescribed requirements are met.

The bill provides a 10-day cooling-off period, during which time the agreement for the assignment of a life insurance policy may be cancelled. The Financial Services Commissioner of Ontario is required to provide oversight and to ensure consumer protection.

MOTIONS

APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the appointment of a temporary Financial Accountability Officer.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Minister?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Ordered, that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request an extension of the appointment of the Honourable J. David Wake as temporary Financial Accountability Officer as provided in the Financial Accountability Officer Act, 2013, S.O. 2013, c. 4., and section 77(c) of the Legislation Act, 2006, to September 26, 2018, or until the effective date of appointment of a permanent Financial Accountability Officer, whichever comes first."

And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister moves that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispense. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Bill Walker: "Whereas lack of access to dental care affects overall health and well-being, and poor oral health is linked to diabetes, cardiovascular, respiratory disease, and Alzheimer's disease; and

"Whereas it is estimated that two to three million people in Ontario have not seen a dentist in the past year, mainly due to the cost of private dental services; and

"Whereas approximately every nine minutes a person in Ontario arrives at a hospital emergency room with a dental problem but can only get painkillers and antibiotics, and this costs the health care system at least \$31 million annually with no treatment of the problem;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to invest in public oral health programs for low-income adults and seniors...."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CARDIAC CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: "Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the evidence shows that death rates surge when cardiac patients are cut off from rehab care; those in cardio rehab for more than three years have a 60% increased chance of living after 14 years; and

"Whereas London Health Sciences champions patient-centred care and evidence-based practice, and should not put cutting costs before saving and improving the lives of the almost 2,000 patients currently in the program; and

"Whereas the program only needs \$300,000 to stay open (almost half of that is covered by donations);

"Therefore be it resolved that:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to require London Health Sciences to keep the Cardiac Fitness Institute open to serve the thousands of London Health Sciences Centre patients who benefit from its life-saving and life-prolonging services."

I fully agree with this petition and ask Rhys to deliver it to the table.

1330

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly that has been compiled by my guests in the Legislature today.

"That Animal Cruelty Legislation be Amended to Recognize the Plight of Kiska, Canada's Last Remaining Captive Orca.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario, under the leadership of Premier Kathleen Wynne, has recognized, through clear scientific research, that Orcinus orcas (further known as orca) are an extremely emotional, exceptionally intelligent, highly social, deep-diving and wide-ranging species that have no place residing in chlorinated concrete tanks; and

"Whereas because of these exceptional traits, the government of Ontario has acknowledged and since prohibited the further breeding and acquisition of orcas within the province; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario failed to include Kiska—Ontario's, and in fact Canada's, sole surviving captive orca—in the recent prohibition of orcas; and

"Whereas Kiska shares all these same traits as her wild counterparts, the very same traits the government has now recognized do not make appropriate candidates for captivity; and

"Whereas not recognizing the specific situation of Kiska in the prohibition makes no logical nor humane sense as she is the only captive in the entire world who is forced to reside in complete seclusion from any other marine animal;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the current legislation (Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, RSO 1990, c. O.36) be amended to recognize and address the plight of Kiska (who resides at Marineland Canada in Niagara Falls, Ontario) based on her special circumstances as noted above."

I fully embrace and endorse this petition and I leave it with page Eliana.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas since 2006, the Auditor General of Ontario had been responsible for reviewing all government advertising to ensure it was not partisan; and

"Whereas in 2015, the Wynne government watered down the legislation, removing the ability of the Auditor General to reject partisan ads and essentially making the Auditor General a rubber stamp; and

"Whereas the Wynne government has since spent millions to run ads such as those for the Ontario pension plan that were extremely partisan in nature; and

"Whereas the Wynne government is currently using hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' dollars to run partisan ... ads; and

"Whereas the government did not feel the need to advertise to inform the people of Ontario of any of the many hydro rate increases; and

"Whereas history shows that the Wynne and McGuinty governments have increased ad spending in the year preceding a general election;...

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately reinstate the Auditor General's authority to review all government advertising for partisan messages before the ads run."

I'm very pleased to affix my name and give it to page Emmanuel.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Michael Mantha: Here are 3,300 signatures of another 10,000 that are coming in.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) is made up of a team of world-leading experts in child health, the current space isn't optimal for providing world-class health care. Founded over 140 years ago, SickKids currently operates in outdated buildings in critical need of transformation. Essential patient care areas used to treat our most vulnerable population are overcrowded and underfunded, resulting in longer lengths of stay, increased chances of infection and a lack of privacy.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to express their support for the SickKids redevelopment plan and call upon the government of Ontario to provide approval for SickKids capital plan proposal.

"Further, we petition the Legislative Assembly to request that monies be allocated to provide SickKids with the requested financial resources to support their infrastructure plan to modernize their facilities to enable them to provide our children with the world-class health care they deserve."

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to page Tamsyn.

ENERGY CONTRACTS

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Premier recently stated that it has been a mistake that government policies have caused electricity

bills to rise so dramatically, resulting in hardship for thousands of Ontarians; and

"Whereas on September 27, 2016, Minister Thibeault announced that because Ontario has a sufficient supply of all forms of energy to meet demands over the next decade, he was suspending the LRP-II process; and

"Whereas according to the IESO and the government, the trend has been toward declining energy consumption in the province, decreasing the need for new generation; and

"Whereas overpayment for unneeded wind and solar energy in Ontario is causing Ontarians' electricity bills to rise to increasingly unaffordable levels; and

"Whereas over half of Ontarians' power bills are regulatory, delivery charges and the global adjustment; and

"Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours to the south at a significant loss; and

"Whereas many LRP I projects are approved by the IESO without community support or agreement, without abutting landowner agreements, and without prior local First Nations support, although these priorities were well-advertised in the process; and

"Whereas the 'Notice to Proceed' stage which triggers most of the IESO commercial commitments has not happened; and

"Whereas the IESO's payment of pre-NTP costs would be a tiny fraction of the projects' avoided capital investments:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately cancel all LRP-I contracts, such as Nation Rise Wind project in North Stormont."

I agree with this and will pass it off to page Aidan.

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

"Whereas over a century ago, workers in Ontario who were injured on the job gave up the right to sue their employers, in exchange for a system that would provide them with just compensation;

"Whereas decades of cost-cutting have pushed injured workers into poverty and onto publicly funded social assistance programs, and have gradually curtailed the rights of injured workers;

"Whereas injured workers have the right to quality and timely medical care, compensation for lost wages, and protection from discrimination;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to accomplish the following for injured workers in Ontario:

"Eliminate the practice of 'deeming' or 'determining,' which bases compensation on phantom jobs that injured workers do not actually have;

"Ensure that the WSIB prioritizes and respects the medical opinions of the health care providers who treat the injured worker directly;

"Prevent compensation from being reduced or denied based on 'pre-existing conditions' that never affected the worker's ability to function prior to the work injury."

Speaker, I fully agree. I'm going to sign this and give it to Tahira to bring up to the front.

VOTING AGE

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that's more to my private member's bill that I hope to reintroduce shortly.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas pursuant to section S. 15(1)(a) of the Election Act, every person is entitled to vote who, on the general polling day, has attained 18 years of age; and

"Whereas youth in Ontario want to be politically engaged; and

"Whereas younger person(s) have a vested interest in the selection of their political representatives; and

"Whereas young person(s) should not have to pay taxes without representation; and

"Whereas jurisdictions including (and not limiting) Austria and Brazil have extended the eligible voter age (1); and

"Whereas electoral polls indicate a higher rate of electoral turnout in these jurisdictions (2); and

"Whereas young person(s) have the knowledge and maturity to participate in the electoral process;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario lower the eligible voter age to 16 years old, pursuant to amendments made to section S. 15(1)(a) Election Act."

I certainly support and endorse this petition and leave it with Rachel.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario on industrial wind turbines, which states:

"Whereas residents of Ontario want an immediate moratorium on all further industrial wind" turbine "development;

"Whereas residents living in close proximity to proposed turbine locations are concerned about the impact on their health, the local environment, declining property values and the lack of local decision-making on industrial wind farm projects;

"Whereas unaffordable subsidies paid through the feed-in tariff program are causing electricity rates to skyrocket;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"To place a moratorium on all further industrial wind farm development, restore local decision-making, and to cancel the feed-in tariff program."

Madam Speaker, I fully support this petition and I will affix my signature to it and give it to page Humza.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Michael Mantha: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas hydro bills in Ontario have become unaffordable for too many people;"—

Mr. James J. Bradley: Not lately.

1340

Mr. Michael Mantha: Of course they have.

"Whereas reducing hydro bills by up to 30% for families and businesses is an ambitious but realistic target;

"Whereas the only way to fix the hydro system is to address the root causes of high prices including privatization, excessive profit margins, oversupply, unfavourable net export practices and more;

"Whereas Ontario families should not have to pay time-of-use premiums, and those living in a rural or northern region should not have to pay higher, punitive delivery charges;

"Whereas changing the financing of private contracts and the global adjustment fails to reduce the long-term cost of hydro for families and businesses, does not fix the system and, in fact, will cost billions of dollars extra in borrowing costs;

"Whereas Hydro One can be returned to public ownership and management without increasing rates;

"Whereas returning Hydro One to public ownership would deliver over \$7 billion back to the province and the people of Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, express our support for reducing hydro bills for businesses and families by up to 30%, eliminating mandatory time-of-use, ending unfair rural delivery costs, and restoring public ownership of Hydro One."

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to page Gajalini to bring down to the table.

ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Percy Hatfield: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas naloxone is a medication that can reverse the symptoms of an opioid overdose; and

"Whereas the provincial Expert Working Group on Narcotic Addiction (EWGNA) has recommended that the ministry 'increase and sustain the availability of naloxone overdose prevention kits and harm reduction information via public health units across the province';

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Instruct the Ontario government to expand the naloxone distribution program, which restricts the dispensing of naloxone to individuals who are current needle exchange program clients or patients in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care hepatitis C treatment and outreach program, to include:

"—not-for-profit agencies and organizations that service individuals at risk of opioid overdose;

"—individuals that support and/or care for individuals at risk of opioid overdose; and

"—any individual living in Ontario that is 16 years of age and older and dependent on opioids."

I will sign this. I agree with it. I'll give it to my page from Windsor-Tecumseh, Tamsyn, to bring up to the desk.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The time allocated for petitions has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

TAXPAYER PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DES CONTRIBUABLES

Mr. Hillier moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to amend the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999 / Projet de loi 15, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la protection des contribuables.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Before I get into the bill, I'm going to just provide a little historical context to the Taxpayer Protection Act. It was introduced in this House in 1999 and passed by the Progressive Conservative government of the day in 1999. The Taxpayer Protection Act took new avenues to protect taxpayers from governments' coming out with new forms of taxation at the time in an unaccountable way or not a transparent way to the people of Ontario.

The bill, in 1999, stated that this House and the government of the day and the governments subsequent would be obligated to either tell people through a general election if there were plans to increase taxes or to create new taxes, or, in mid-term, if they wanted to increase taxes, they would have to go to a referendum of the people and put it before the people before a new tax was adopted—a strong, strong measure to protect taxpayers from the abuses of government. Make government state during a general election if they plan on introducing new taxes or go to a referendum.

We held true to that for a number of years, until 2003, when the Liberal government took over in Ontario. They immediately found a loophole in that Taxpayer Protec-

tion Act of 1999. They found that they could exempt themselves from the law using either an exemption or a “notwithstanding” in new legislation.

So in 2003, we saw immediately the Liberal government of the day bring in a new health care tax—they tried to use the term “premium.” They brought it in without telling people during the general election, so that was a violation of the Taxpayer Protection Act. They did it without bringing forward a referendum. That would have been a violation of the Taxpayer Protection Act. Then they tried to use the term “premium” instead of “tax,” but it was still determined to be a tax. So they’ve used this mechanism to say, “Notwithstanding the Taxpayer Protection Act, we’re going to bring in a new tax.” It really makes the Taxpayer Protection Act redundant.

So I’ve introduced this bill, an amendment to the Taxpayer Protection Act which would prevent the government from bringing in a bill to exempt themselves from the functions of the Taxpayer Protection Act unless, of course, they did the same thing: Go to a referendum or state their case to the people of this province in a general election. That is what representative and accountable governments must do. They must inform the electorate of what their intentions are during the campaign, and if they want to alter significantly from that course during their mandate, they should once again go back to the people.

Taxation is a critical, critical function of government and a critical function of society. I’m just going to read a little bit from the throne speech so that we know. On page 4 of the throne speech there are a number of facts, and we can attribute most of those facts to excessive taxation. Here’s what the throne speech said:

“For many of our friends and neighbours, life is getting harder.

“Our world is changing in ways we’ve never seen before and at speeds that make it feel hard to keep up.

“The cost of living is rising, and at the same time, stable, long-term jobs—jobs that pay a decent wage—are proving harder to find.

“Part-time and precarious work is becoming more common ...

“And as these pressures mount, they bear down on families where it matters most.

“People are struggling to take care of themselves, and their loved ones.”

That’s a quote directly from this throne speech that was introduced on Monday.

I can tell you those are facts. We all recognize them. But let’s take a look at what has caused it.

In Ontario today, people pay twice as much in taxes every year as they do for their homes. Twice as much is paid in taxes as for shelter. If we want to make life more affordable, easier and less burdensome, why don’t we do something about that significant cost?

This government talks about affordable housing; how about we begin to talk about affordable taxation? The average family pays more in this province in taxes than they do for all the necessities of life—more than shelter, more than food. All the necessities combined take up the

average family’s income at 37%, but taxes are at 42.5%. How can that be, that the necessities of life are less costly than the taxation in life? This is a bizarre, bizarre situation, Speaker.

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Let me just provide a few examples of how this government has manipulated and how they have circumvented the Taxpayer Protection Act over the years. They, of course, created a new high-income tax bracket. That tax change in 2012 and expanded once again in 2014 raised the top provincial tax rate before surtaxes up to over 13%. They used that exemption process. They purposely circumvented the Taxpayer Protection Act. They didn’t mention it in the general election, and they circumvented the act.

Since 2011, the tax on microbrewed beer has more than doubled. Did we ever hear that in an election mandate from this government? Absolutely not. Did it ever go to a referendum? Absolutely not.

The same with taxes on boutique wines: They have been going up year after year after year. They have used that exemption process, that notwithstanding process, to once again circumvent.

Tobacco taxes have gone up seven times since this government has come into power. That may be fine, but governments must be accountable. They must state their case during a general election. If they want to raise taxes, tell the people so. Let them be judged factually, on a truthful platform, and come clean to the people of Ontario.

In 2015, the Ontario budget introduced a new three-cent-a-litre tax on beer. That was not mentioned in the 2014 election. How can it be that this government, during the election platforms, never mentioned what they’re actually going to do?

Before I go on more and more about this, Speaker, I think it’s also interesting to recognize that there’s a correlation: Taxes have been going up each and every year since this Liberal government came into power, but just as importantly, our debt and our deficits have also been going up. Somebody might say, “How can that be? We keep raising taxes, but our debt keeps going up at an even greater rate.” That’s a fact; we’re now well over \$300 billion in debt. What is it? It’s \$312 billion in debt. Just six years ago, our debt stood at \$236 billion. Our taxes keep going up by an ever-increasing rate, and our debt goes up by an ever-increasing rate. Most people would say that’s an impossibility, to achieve that, but that’s what this Liberal government has achieved.

I think we need to recognize that as taxation increases with the Liberal government, debt increases. The only way to counter this—it may sound counterintuitive to the Liberal government—the way to lower our debt is actually to lower our taxation. It’s not an incomprehensible understanding for most people, but it clearly is for this government. Those are the facts: Taxation keeps going up; debt keeps going up.

I’ve introduced this bill to prevent those devious procedural ways of using exemptions and notwithstand-

ing clauses to circumvent their obligation to the people. We'll see if it gets passed in this House today. I hope it does. I'm looking forward to the debate on this bill, about why people believe that government ought not to state their case to the people before they raise taxes—I'm going to be listening for that—or why they ought not to go to a referendum before they make life harder on the people of Ontario and make people struggle more with an ever-increasing taxation burden and an ever-increasing debt burden on them.

Speaker, in the 2015 budget, they did it again: They used that exemption of the Taxpayer Protection Act to bring in the Provincial Land Tax and to increase that. The examples are significant, Speaker. Let's put people first in this province. Let's actually help them out. Forget this caring and fluff and stuff in the throne speech, and let's actually help them.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: As always, it's an honour to stand in this provincial Parliament and speak on behalf of my constituents in Windsor–Tecumseh. On this occasion, we are debating the merits of legislation put forward by the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington. As he has stated, it's similar to a bill introduced in 1999 during the Mike Harris years.

Later on, another former Conservative leader, Tim Hudak, promised to make the Taxpayer Protection Act even stronger back in 2011. Mr. Hudak said that was necessary because the Liberals, under former Premier Dalton McGuinty, had pledged to not raise taxes and then brought in the health tax, the harmonized sales tax and the eco-tax, despite his promises to the contrary. Of course, the Liberals responded by saying that this was the same Tim Hudak who voted twice to override the Taxpayer Protection Act and raise corporate taxes. Is it any wonder, Speaker, why politicians are held in such low regard by Canadians?

There was a poll a couple of years ago carried in the *Huffington Post*. Ipsos Reid was hired to do a trustworthy poll, and more than 4,000 people were surveyed. Firefighters came out on top, with an approval rating of 77%. Paramedics were close at 74%. Way down the list—way, way down the list—telemarketers hit rock bottom at 4%, car salespeople at 5%, and politicians and bloggers were at 6%. Yes, unfortunately, politicians have been known to stretch the truth, bend the facts, and outright lie, especially around election time, so it's no wonder our respect and believability factor isn't always where we would like it to be.

Speaker, I'm older than you, so you likely won't remember the former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. I still remember him banging his shoe on the desk while making a point at the United Nations. Here's a quote from Mr. Khrushchev: "Politicians are the same all over. They promise to build bridges even when there are no rivers."

Oscar Ameringer, the Mark Twain of American socialism, said: "Politics is the gentle art of getting votes

from the poor and campaign funds from the rich, by promising to protect each from the other."

Here's another one. This one is from Emma Goldman, an anarchist and writer: "Politicians promise you heaven before election and give you hell after."

Speaker, nobody wants to pay more taxes. Governments often say they have balanced the books just before going into an election, and the public finds out when the votes are counted and a new government takes over that they are facing a huge deficit from the previous administration, and anything but a balanced budget.

David Peterson was voted out of office just as the worst recession since the end of World War II was about to hit Ontario, and Bob Rae was coming in as Premier. Peterson claimed his books were balanced. In fact, the NDP started out in the hole with a deficit of \$8.5 million.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Billion.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Did I say "million"? I meant \$8.5 billion, with a B.

When the Liberals came in after Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, the PCs had claimed that the books were balanced but they left a \$5.5-billion deficit. That's after selling the 407 in a one-time-revenue scheme that generated \$3 billion, or the deficit would have been even higher. That was after downloading services onto the municipal tax base, which saved the PCs \$2 billion or \$3 billion but shifted that tax burden onto the backs of the municipal tax base. I don't know the real deficit. It certainly wasn't a balanced budget, as they claimed.

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Speaker, Winston Churchill was always good for a quote. He said, "We contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle."

If we go back to Benjamin Franklin, we find him saying that "but in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes," to which there's a great reply from the author Margaret Mitchell: "Death, taxes and childbirth! There's never any convenient time for any of them."

On the other hand, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. has said, "I like to pay taxes. With them, I buy civilization."

At the heart of this bill is that politicians should keep their word—no broken promises. If you don't campaign on raising taxes, you can't do it when you're in office. That's like saying that you wouldn't sell Hydro One while going door to door during an election before you're elected, and then listening to someone who told you, "Yes, but you know what? We can make a lot of money for our friends on Bay Street if we sell a majority of the shares." Well, guess who does that sort of thing?

The poet Robert Service said that "a promise made is a debt unpaid."

Football legend Lou Holtz said, "Don't ever promise more than you can deliver, but always deliver more than you promise."

How about William Lyon Mackenzie? He was known to say, "The promises of yesterday are the taxes of today."

Then, of course, there's always Joe Moore, whoever he was. He says, "You can't trust a promise someone makes while they're drunk, in love, hungry or running for office."

Speaker, should politicians try to buy their way into the office, maybe they'll recall the words of Dwight D. Eisenhower:

"As we peer into society's future, we—you and I, and our government—must avoid the impulse to live only for today, plundering, for our own ease and convenience, the precious resources of tomorrow. We cannot mortgage the material assets of our grandchildren without risking the loss also of their political and spiritual heritage. We want democracy to survive for all generations to come, not to become the insolvent phantom of tomorrow." Words to think about, Speaker.

My final quote this afternoon is from Mahatma Gandhi:

"Carefully watch your thoughts, for they become your words. Manage and watch your words, for they will become your actions. Consider and judge your actions, for they have become your habits. Acknowledge and watch your habits, for they shall become your values. Understand and embrace your values, for they become your destiny."

Speaker, perhaps it will be the destiny of some of us to make and break a promise during an election. History shows us, after all, that signing a pledge not to do so doesn't mean much to some politicians.

I understand where the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington is coming from, and I look forward to hearing what other members have to say about this proposed legislation here this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: It is also a pleasure to be able to stand on a Thursday—private members' public business—and bring debate from the good people of Beaches-East York. I'm delighted to be able to participate in this discussion.

I'm particularly delighted that I could follow the member for Windsor-Tecumseh. He's so erudite. It's an incredibly good, well-researched background. I wonder how many people picked up on the Cremation of Sam McGee reference about "a promise made is a debt unpaid." I was reading it on the weekend with some friends of ours, and it was interesting to hear him bring it up today.

To speak on Bill 15, the Taxpayer Protection Amendment Act: The member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington is, of course, reintroducing a bill that he brought in once before. It was soundly defeated in this House, for very good reasons. I suspect that it will happen once again today.

First off, let's just take a look at the focus of where the member takes it—just the name of the bill itself, the Taxpayer Protection Amendment Act. It's so typical of the members of the official opposition to think that taxpayers are the only people who matter in the province

of Ontario. There are a lot more people who we serve in Ontario than strictly the taxpayers. That includes the people who don't pay taxes, people who are new Canadians, people who are on OW and people who are on ODSP, who aren't making enough income to pay taxes. We have a responsibility to look after those who are less fortunate in our society. I know that's the Liberal way, and it's what makes me very proud to be a Liberal in this House, that we do look after those who are less fortunate than ourselves. To create a bill that is focused strictly on taxpayer rights, I think, is in itself mean-spirited, and I couldn't support it.

I also found it very interesting that the member talked at length about the taxes that he was most concerned about: tobacco taxes, liquor taxes, beer taxes, craft beer taxes. As you know, I have been a pioneer in the craft beer industry for years, going back some 40 years, when I initially raised the changes which allowed for craft beers in this province to come forward. What we saw recently and what our government was able to do on the alcohol file was actually to reduce taxes on craft ciders and craft beers.

I'm very proud of the role that I could take to encourage our government to encourage those sectors, as we have encouraged the craft beer sector. It has been extraordinarily successful. Everyone making craft beer in the province of Ontario, I believe, is making money. They're just popping up everywhere. There's going to be a craft beer in every single municipality in the province of Ontario soon, and I hope that is followed by people making craft ciders and craft spirits.

I had the pleasure at the Oscar awards—I was down at the Palais Royale as my friends got the Oscar for best picture for *The Shape of Water*. I enjoyed the wonderful spirits of Beattie's. It's a farm up in Alliston. I went and chatted with the owners of Beattie's, and they said, "My God, this is the most incredible tax reduction that we've ever seen in Ontario." It allows them as a small business to create jobs.

I look at this particular bill, and as I read it through, I wonder: Are you going to need to bring a referendum or make a promise during the election that you're going to reduce taxes in order to follow through on that pledge? I think that would be ludicrous. It's the same thing: Would you have to pass a special bill in order to reduce taxes in the province of Ontario? We're taking those directions.

The member talked about how taxes are rising. Well, we haven't raised income tax in this province outside of the very first year here. We raised a little tax on the top 1% of earners, but for the most part, we have done everything we've done building the province of Ontario up by holding the line on taxes and investing in communities and investing in infrastructure, and it has been extraordinarily successful.

I'd also like to point out that there is an accountability for raising taxes. It's called an election. We're coming into one very shortly. If the member thinks that people are going to be judging our party as a party that raised taxes to the point that they want to vote us out of office, I

think he's sorely mistaken, because it just hasn't happened. It would be hard for him to go door to door and say we have raised taxes.

Now, we have increased debt; I will concede that point to him. But, Speaker, when you invest the kinds of monies that we're investing in infrastructure to build this province up, you do increase your debt load, but it's all offset by assets that are being built across this province: transit assets, hospital assets, school assets. So although there is some unsecured debt as a result of deficits, the bulk of what we see in the debt in this province is secured by hard assets that we can stand by, that make this province a better place.

We know what happened in California when they brought in a rule that you couldn't raise taxes without a referendum. They stopped investing in infrastructure, and it was a complete and utter disaster. I'm prepared to take the knock that if in the course of the four-year program, we feel it's necessary to make a change in expenditures, we bring it in. We haven't had to raise taxes in the last four years, but circumstances change. Four years can be a long time to go along, and so we wouldn't do it.

There was a great example of a Liberal in Hamilton, Sheila Copps, who did resign her seat because she had promised not to do something and then ended up being part of a party that did something. That's a little different, because that is a broken promise. But there were things that we had to do. The member for Windsor-Tecumseh will remember that on page 22 of the preface of our budget last time, it talked about all the assets that we were considering selling off, but we did only settle on the one, Hydro One, and it has been a great deal for the taxpayers of Ontario. I'm prepared to stand up and defend that any time at all.

Speaker, I'm delighted to speak on this bill today. I just don't think it's going to get my support.

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The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I have the pleasure today to stand, as well, and speak to An Act to amend the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999, as brought forward by my honourable colleague from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. His incredible advocacy on behalf of not only his constituents but the best interests of Ontarians is something that is laudable and something I wish to congratulate and thank him for.

In listening to the various speakers we've had, I've got to say that I admire the honesty of the NDP, and particularly, in this case—I'm not going to call out the member for Windsor-Tecumseh. I admire in most NDP governments their honesty, insofar as when an NDP government wants big government and wants to take over a lot of services and provide a lot of services—and that's fine, that's their philosophy; I understand that—they're honest about upfront taxes. They increase taxes. We've seen a former member of this House, the current leader of the federal NDP, talk a lot about tax fairness. We can have philosophical disagreements about what that looks like.

From my perspective, what he's talking about is really just increasing taxes on everybody. But at least we know where the NDP is coming from. When they come in, they provide services and they increase taxes. That's okay. That's what they have always said they stand for. I think it's fair to say that although no one says they like higher taxes—including what they would say—at least they're honest about where they are coming from.

The Liberals, on the other hand, like to talk a good game. I distinctly—actually, I don't remember this because, quite frankly, I was too young to remember this. But I distinctly saw a very well-known pledge by a former Premier of Ontario, and it was a bit American in style, in the sense of, "Read my lips: no new taxes." But instead of saying, "Read my lips: no new taxes," he signed a pledge. After 15 years of Liberal government, the audacity of that government to stand and say that the investments they've been making are being serviced by taxes—

Interjection.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Well, yes, they have increased taxes. Absolutely, they have.

Here's an article that says, "Ontario's Uncompetitive Personal Income Tax Hurting Ontarians."

When I meet with stakeholders in my portfolio of research, innovation and technology, they say that we have a brain drain going on. We see people leaving our province in droves. Graduates of Waterloo University are going to Silicon Valley, to Massachusetts, to Boston. That's also because of our tax rate.

So I can appreciate where the NDP is coming from, but when a Liberal government stands there and says, "We're not increasing taxes too much"—well, what is debt but a tax on future generations? Answer that question. It's not a riddle. It's a very simple formula. If you don't want to raise taxes now, you're going to sink the province into debt, you're going to sink future generations into debt. You have to pay that off. And how are you paying that off? In the Liberals' case, they don't really have an answer. So they say they're going to—what?—sign another pledge saying they're not going to increase taxes? How did that go over in 2003?

It's disturbing the amount of times I sit here in this House and hear members of the government stand up—I'm not sure if they are just misled or if they sincerely believe their own talking points, their own spin on where they're coming from.

This is the type of legislation that actually shows respect for all Ontarians. In his speech, the member opposite said, "We're not only here for the taxpayers." Fair enough. But to say that not everyone pays taxes is a bit simplistic, and I don't think it's very honest. I don't know anyone who hasn't at some point, even if it's just through buying a cup of coffee, had to pay taxes. No matter who you are, no matter whether you're a new Canadian or someone who doesn't make enough to pay income tax, there are taxes. There is practically nothing that is not taxed in some way, shape or form.

I remember the HST coming in—

Interjection.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Oh, sorry. Never mind. I'm going to just say that I remember the HST coming in. I was buying a bicycle. I was young. I was buying a bicycle and the 13% tax increased the whole cost of that bicycle. Taxes hurt.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in this House and, today, to respond to the proposed amendment to the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999, put forward by the member from the longest title in the House: Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

I'll say from the outset that we are not going to support this bill, but I would like to say that I serve on several committees with the member and I have a lot of respect for his perspectives. But in this case, his perspective, while well stated, is purposely very narrow.

During his presentation, which I listened to very intently, he stated that the government or the parties ought to state their case to the people regarding taxation. Well, they also ought to state their case to the people regarding where they are going to spend or not spend. No one wants to pay taxes; that's a natural thing. But we do want to have good services. We do want to have health care. We do want to have good education. We do want to have adequate long-term care. We do want to have a transportation system.

So we need to spend money carefully, we need to spend money in the right places, but we do need to spend money. We need to invest in our province to maintain the quality of life both for us and for our children and grandchildren. We need to invest it wisely, and when it's public infrastructure, public education, public health care, that has to be raised through taxation. So to state what you're going to do with the money you raise, or fail to raise, is as important as, if not more important than, simply saying you have to have a referendum if you're going to raise taxes.

We will take the member at his word, but in the last version of the Conservative platform, there was a \$6-billion hole which was just going to be filled: "Well, we'll find that from efficiencies." Now that platform is no longer in place. We don't know where—the new platform states that they are going to run on a balanced budget; there will be no tax increase. If they are going to state that, then they should be upfront and say where they are going to save that money or what services they are actually going to cut. Shouldn't the parties have to state their case to the people regarding what money they're not going to be able to invest in this province? That's also part of the case. The NDP believes in public services. We believe that it takes money to invest in those public services.

The Conservative Party seems to believe that that is not the case, that they should be able to hold the budget and not raise taxes on anything. They had a \$6-billion deficit in their last platform, and now the promise from the Conservative Party, to date, is that the leader will leave no stone unturned. What services will they cut?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 15. Speaker, the issue of taxation affects, as you well

know, every person and business in Ontario. It determines not only the prosperity of families and businesses but also the ability of governments to deliver the services to residents across the province. It used to be true in Ontario that if you worked hard, spent wisely and saved diligently, hard-working families could get ahead. Well, that's no longer true in Kathleen Wynne's Ontario.

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The proposed legislation before us seeks to protect the interests of taxpayers by improving government oversight and accountability over the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999. Contrary to the Liberal government, my colleagues and I in the Progressive Conservative caucus recognize that governments cannot tax themselves into prosperity. The late, great American President John F. Kennedy was a firm believer in this concept. He believed that cutting taxes created more opportunity for citizens by putting more money into their pockets and, by association, the economy.

In his September 18, 1963, radio and television address to the American people, he had this to say:

"A tax cut means higher family income and higher business profits and a balanced ... budget. Every taxpayer and his family will have more money left over after taxes for a new car, a new home, new conveniences, education, and investment...."

"Prosperity is the real way to balance our budget.... By lowering tax rates, by increasing jobs and income, we can expand tax revenues and bring finally our budget into balance."

This quote resonates as much today as it did nearly 60 years ago, particularly the point on expanding the economy as the key to increasing prosperity for both individuals and businesses. The reality today is that for 15 years, the Liberal government has made life harder for Ontario families. They are paying more and more and getting less.

Speaker, I am going to be sharing my time with the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. I wanted to end by referencing another quote from President John F. Kennedy: "It is a paradoxical truth that tax rates are too high ... and tax revenues are too low and the soundest way to raise the revenues in the long run is to cut the rates now.... Cutting taxes now is not to incur a budget deficit, but to achieve the more prosperous, expanding economy which can bring a budget surplus."

Thank you, Speaker. I look forward to comments from my colleague for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Yvan Baker: I have to say that it's always a pleasure to rise in the House to talk about something that I think is really important to people across Ontario and in my community, and something that I actually know quite a bit about, and that's finance. I have the opportunity every day to work with Minister Sousa in the Ministry of Finance as his PA on issues like this one, and so I'm pleased to engage in the debate on the member's private member's bill.

There was a lot said during this debate, and if I had more time—I really wish I had more time, because I would spend a lot of time debunking the myths that are coming from the opposition. It is really disappointing me the way they have tried to use this bill to raise and, frankly, share information in a way that leads people to believe that we have not been responsible with their tax dollars, that we have not done things like balance the budget, which we've done. They talk as though they are knowledgeable in finance. As someone who actually is knowledgeable in finance, I can say that some of the things that they say demonstrate that they are not as knowledgeable as they claim to be.

But what's most disappointing to me, Speaker, is that their credibility on this issue is incredibly poor. Let me tell you what I mean. Some of the members opposite spent their time talking about our fiscal record. It's interesting to hear the PC Party talk about balanced budgets. It's interesting because the PCs, during record economic growth in Ontario, the last time they were in office, most of the years they were in office, ran large deficits. You know what compounds the problem with that? They actually ran those deficits not only during times of record economic growth, when they were collecting record tax revenues, but they then cut taxes further, which further put us in a deficit. Then, in an election year, to balance the budget, they sold the 407 for an amount of money far below what it's actually worth. These are the folks who are now lecturing us on how to manage tax dollars. These are the folks who are now saying, "We know finance and you don't know finance." So the hypocrisy, Speaker, is really disappointing.

Now, just on this particular bill, I have to say that there is already legislation in place that requires that steps be taken for any taxes to be raised.

Just to recap, the current Taxpayer Protection Act requires a referendum in order to increase a tax. That already exists. And if a government wishes to raise a tax, then that referendum can be bypassed. This can be done by passing a bill that amends the Taxpayer Protection Act to exempt the particular tax change from the referendum requirements. Then a separate, subsequent bill must be introduced to actually introduce the tax or to raise the tax.

In essence, what this private member's bill would do is create a third step. First you would have to require the passage of a bill that introduces the tax. Then a separate bill would be required to amend the TPA, and another bill would be required to pass, to amend the respective tax legislation to implement the tax change. Basically, this member's bill does nothing. The only thing that this member's bill does is create red tape and bureaucracy.

Just to add to the list of hypocrisy that I've just spoken about, this member who gets up over and over, and his colleagues who get up over and over and speak about how they want to cut red tape, these same members are now—this should be called the red tape act, the Progressive Conservative red tape act. This is how we can make government less—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to need the member to withdraw that comment about another member.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Continue.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Let me rephrase: It is unfortunate that the PC members are trying to pass a law that goes counter to what they claim they stand for. They claim they stand for the reduction of red tape. They claim that they stand for the balancing of budgets. They claim that they stand for efficient and effective use of taxpayer dollars. Yet they bring forward a private member's bill that creates red tape and has absolutely no benefits. They couldn't balance the budget for the life of them when they were in office, and then they waste money. The 407 is the best example: They sold a \$9-billion asset for \$3 billion.

They have the nerve to stand here in this House and say they're ready to govern? They have the nerve to stand here in this House and lecture us, and lecture people like myself who actually know a lot about finance, about how to manage money? They have the nerve to waste this Legislature's time on a ridiculous bill like this? They should be ashamed.

We should be debating the issues that matter to the people of Ontario. We should be debating how we're going to make their lives easier. The way we do that is the way this government has done it: by actually spending taxpayer dollars wisely, by going line by line through the budget and figuring out how to manage their money. That's how we've done that. That's how we've balanced the budget. That's why we're going to run a surplus.

The members opposite should sit back, reflect and think about what they would do if they were in government and how they'd do it differently, because right now the hypocrisy coming from that side is astounding.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like to thank my colleague the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington for bringing this important bill forward. His intention is to entrench in law oversight and accountability in the way that government collects taxes from Ontario families, and not allow such things as a notwithstanding clause to be used by the Liberals to disregard the Taxpayer Protection Act.

This amendment comes as a result of years of disrespect of taxpayers' dollars that saw the McGuinty-Wynne Liberal administration hike taxes on Ontario families, and then waste billions of tax dollars on political self-interests like eHealth and the gas plant scandal.

The member from Etobicoke Centre just used a comment over there, a term called debunking myths. I wonder if he can debunk the myth that his government has tripled the debt in 15 years.

The Liberals brought in a health tax, increasing Ontarians' taxes by about \$900 per person, per year, or \$3 billion a year out of the pockets of Ontario taxpayers and families. I wonder if he can debunk that myth.

There was also the new HST tax that Dalton McGuinty brought shortly after he was elected Premier, despite his election pledge: "I won't raise your taxes." I wonder if they can debunk that. The eco-tax—"I will not raise taxes." I wonder if they can debunk that myth.

1430

The Liberals' new mega-taxes drove up the cost of everything from gasoline to everyday goods. What's more concerning, the burden was compounded by massive hikes to user fees on everything from drivers' licences to fishing and hunting licences. They can call it whatever term they want, but more money is coming out in the form of taxation and premiums to every single taxpayer out there.

What we in the PC Party want to do is put such tax hikes to a referendum. If you're not going to tell the people in an election campaign when you're going forward, you have to bring it to a referendum before you can make the change.

We have 15 years' worth of evidence that the status quo is not sustainable. The Liberals cannot be trusted with taxpayers' money, and their word or promise is worth as much as the last one, and that is a big zero. They themselves certainly can't be trusted to put the tax referendum law in place, even though sometime in the last 15 years, they said they would.

Consider that if they had, then we would not have seen these spending scandals:

- the Green Energy Act, that has cost \$37 billion more than the market price and will be overpaid by \$133 billion by 2032;

- the eHealth scandal, that cost almost \$2 billion;

- tripled hydro rates;

- the gas plant scandal, that cost over \$1 billion. They recently borrowed \$25 billion for a two-year hydro rebate. Taxes will be needed to repay this debt, which, as has already been said by the Auditor General, will be between \$43 billion and \$93 billion;

- the Ornge scandal, that cost about \$700 million;

- the Ontario Northland railway scandal, that cost \$820 million;

- the SAMS computer scandal, that cost at least \$300 million.

Now, in this recent budget, although they keep saying the word "surplus," they're projecting an \$8-billion deficit, which is going to cut away from programs and actually cost the future more money.

The list goes on and on, but I don't need to keep going to prove that Ontarians have been paying and continue to pay higher taxes and fees while getting fewer services, as a result of 15 years of Liberal waste and mismanagement of taxpayer dollars.

When taxpayers are at the mercy of a government whose word cannot be trusted, you need to entrench the taxpayer protection promise in law. Ontario families need relief. They need a government that will not use them as its own personal ATM. It's about trust, it's about credibility and it's about integrity.

Sadly, Madam Speaker, it will be to keep overspending, wasting, raising taxes and running multi-year deficits

without the consent of Ontario voters. We know that they'll do it again, and that's why we need a change here in the province of Ontario. They've tripled the debt to \$330 billion, and as my colleague said, debt is a tax on future generations and is not acceptable.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I will return to the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington for wrap-up.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thanks to the members from the third party for their comments on my bill, and also to the members of my own party for their thoughtful comments on Bill 15.

I would like to make a few comments about what I heard from the government side's members who purposely distorted Bill 15 and, I would say, didn't even bother to take the opportunity to read the bill before they engaged in the debate on this.

I heard the member for Beaches-East York say that this bill was mean-spirited. For us to ensure that there's an adequate level of protection for taxpayers in this province means that we're mean-spirited. Speaker, that is a distortion.

He also asked, "Are we going to get a referendum to lower taxes?" Well, if he had read either the Taxpayer Protection Act or this amendment, he would see that it is the raising of taxes that requires a referendum or a statement in a general election, not the lowering of taxes.

It is unfortunate that the Liberal members can't even take a few minutes out of their busy day of putting their hands in people's pockets, to read the legislation that's before the House—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. The member will please withdraw.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, let's have an honest discussion. We can't have an honest discussion with this government when they think it is mean-spirited to be truthful and honest with people in a general election—by going to a referendum and stating their case and abiding by the law.

I know the member from Etobicoke Centre was thumping his chest about how smart he was with finances, but he didn't read the bill either.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

Before I call orders of the day, I want to remind all members that 12 of you have been warned already. It is never, never too early to be named.

PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LA PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS PERSONNELS

Mr. Takhar moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act with respect to the custody, use and disclosure of personal information / Projet de loi 14, Loi

portant sur la garde, l'utilisation et la divulgation de renseignements personnels.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: It is a privilege to speak in the Legislature about the Personal Information Protection Act, 2018, or PIPA.

While recently reading the book *Hit Refresh* by Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, it struck me that the collection, use and disclosure of personal information in the private sector in Ontario is governed by federal legislation. Ontario does have legislation regarding personal information in the public sector in the form of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; however, we are lagging behind provinces such as British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec in creating provincial legislation to regulate the collection, use and disclosure of personal information in the private sector. This bill seeks to give Ontario jurisdiction in developing legislation and regulations to protect personal information.

Madam Speaker, the matter of personal information protection is gaining more and more attention in the media and in the tax sector, as well as different governments around the world. A recent story about Facebook which has been gaining a lot of traction is about the use of the private information of over 50 million Americans in an attempt to sway voter opinion. Not only does this raise questions about the collection, use and disclosure of personal information in the private sector; it also raises a serious ethical question regarding the manipulation of opinion through the analysis of personal data collected without consent.

As we all know, technology can move very quickly, as evidenced by the gadgets we all use today and the growth of e-commerce. As a province, we need to have control over private information security in the private sector, as it is constantly being challenged.

Former privacy commissioner of Ontario Ann Cavoukian is quoted in a *Globe and Mail* article as saying, "Privacy forms the foundation of our freedom. For all those naysayers out there who say, 'Give it up, privacy is dead,' I say, 'Are you kidding me? It's about to have a resurgence.'"

Taking back jurisdiction helps us to be proactive in the protection of Ontario's private data. If we see province-specific issues arise at a future date, the province can act quickly to find solutions to these problems.

I believe that the principle which we follow as a Legislature is to craft bills that address contemporary issues that are faced by Ontarians in their everyday lives. Furthermore, where possible, legislation can be presented in plain language so that the average person can easily understand it. These two ideals are at the core of this bill that we are debating today.

Plain language can be effective, too, in terms of competency, as there is nothing lost in translation. This bill has been based on the Personal Information Protection

Act currently in place in British Columbia, which has received great reviews from the business community and the public for helping to inform the public as to their rights pertaining to their personal information in the private sector. In addition, the business community has had an easy time implementing the law into their current business practices by instituting a common set of rules for all business.

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella touched on some of these issues in his book: "As tech companies, we have to design trust into everything we do. But policymakers also have an important role. Trust is not only dependent on our technology but also the legal framework that governs it. In this new digital world, we have lost the balance we need in large part because our laws have not caught up with technological changes."

1440

Madam Speaker, it is about time that we address these ethical issues through proper legislation. The protection of private information and how it is collected, used or disclosed by the private sector is at the core of this legislation. This legislation attempts to strike a balance between the right of the individual to protect their personal information and the need of the organization to collect, use and disclose personal information that a reasonable person would consider appropriate in the circumstances.

The collection of private information in the legislation is based on one core principle: the "reasonable person" test. The reasonable person test is commonly used in law. In simple terms, it asks whether or not the average person can reasonably understand the legislation. In upholding this legal principle, this bill is both transparent and accountable.

The proposed legislation also takes into account the recommendations proposed by the Canadian Standards Association, or CSA, in regard to the protection of personal information. This bill addresses concerns in regard to accountability as well as openness and transparency. It also establishes a reasonable person test for how an organization collects, uses and discloses personal information.

Madam Speaker, this bill, if passed, will require organizations to designate one or more individuals to make sure that the organization is following PIPA's rules. It also states that an organization must make the identity and contact information of its privacy officer public, further enriching the values of openness and transparency.

This bill ensures that information collected, used or disclosed by the organization must be consent-based. It prohibits organizations from collecting, using or disclosing personal information without consent. However, this does not apply if the act otherwise authorizes the collection, use or disclosure of the information. There are also rules for the provision of consent, implicit consent and the withdrawal of consent while also setting limitations on the use of personal information. It also governs situations in which personal information may be used without consent, such as medical emergencies or investigations.

Finally, Madam Speaker, the proposed legislation provides exceptions as and when the personal information may be disclosed without consent in situations like the sale of the organization or its business assets for research, statistical, archival or historical purposes. A matter of importance for all businesses is how to handle both personal information of its customers and employees. This bill specifies what sort of information is considered employee personal information. The different levels of identifying purposes and consent-based collection are important in protecting the freedom and privacy of Ontarians.

Individual access to private information is also a key factor in this bill, which lays out a process for individual requests as well as responsibilities for organizations to deal with these requests. An individual can also request to correct their private information, which is important if there's an error or omission, which again is consistent with the CSA recommendation of accurate information.

Correction and annotation procedures further enhance the transparency of this bill, which ensures that corrections are made in a quick manner and disclosed to every other organization which has been provided this incorrect or incomplete information.

It also ensures that annotations are kept for the record in case information is deemed to be correct, and not changed, despite an individual's request to do so, to improve transparency and accuracy.

Finally, exception to access also uses the reasonable person test to allow an organization to refuse access to information under certain circumstances, such as ongoing investigations.

Madam Speaker, the proposed legislation clearly defines and imposes time limits on organizations to respond to individuals' written requests to access or correct their information. This legislation also provides direction regarding the minimum time period required for retention of personal information and for destruction of personal documents. Of irrefutable importance are the security safeguards mandated by this legislation, which include physical, administrative and technical safeguards to protect Ontarians' personal information.

This bill also defines the role of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, who will be responsible for its implementation. The commissioner will also establish an advisory committee to assist him in investigating these complex personal information requests. The commissioner will have the authority to enforce the act, as a failure or refusal to co-operate with certain orders of the commissioner may make persons liable for contempt as if in breach of an order or judgment of the court. The commissioner will report to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly annually on his or her work under the act.

Madam Speaker, this bill will take Ontario into the future in terms of legislation guarding personal information in the private sector as technological innovations continue to be invented and evolve in our society and business sector.

Yet again I would like to quote the CEO of Microsoft. Mr. Nadella expressed this notion very clearly in his

book, where he wrote, "Every wave of technological change has required us to reaffirm the values that undergird protections against unlawful research and seizure and develop new ways to protect them."

He continues by saying, "Benjamin Franklin's creation of the US postal service quickly led to mail fraud—and to laws against it. The telegraph led to wire fraud and eavesdropping—and laws designed to prevent them. Today's devices, the cloud, and artificial intelligence will be used both for good and for evil. Now it is our generation's turn to design legal and regulatory systems that will discourage and punish the evil while encouraging the good to flourish—and to do so in such a fashion that will enhance the overall level of trust in society as a whole."

The proposed legislation is born out of a desire to meet this challenge and provide a framework for future generations to be able to change laws based on a public mandate that will deal with the issues which we may not have thought about in this legislation. As such, I hope that this bill will have bipartisan support for the benefit of the business sector in Ontario as well as each and every individual in this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: We live in a big-data world. Everything we do in our lives generates data. Every purchase, every social media posting and every computer click or phone swipe is captured and stored as data. Combined, this means a person releases on average about 700 items of personal data every day, according to a 2012 study. So it's no wonder that this data has become a valuable commodity. Companies mine our personal data and use it to optimize their practices while trying to improve our lives. For example, the data can show you your spending habits and in turn you can use that information to make smarter financial decisions.

The challenge we face is how we protect our personal privacy while at the same time encouraging these opportunities and benefits. There are, in fact, so many good opportunities and benefits that can come from data technology:

- wellness tracking to make us healthier—I wear a Fitbit to track that, Madam Speaker;

- earning better purchase offers from retailers; and

- helping governments improve productivity and efficiency and make projections for future needs.

I think everyone agrees that data should always be user-driven and user-approved, and that means requiring consent so that we are in control of how our own data is collected and used. This appears to be the intent of Bill 14: to strengthen personal data by requiring consent for how our data is collected, shared and retained so that we are less vulnerable. Bill 14 can change how companies and organizations handle and treat your data by calling for stronger retention rules and whistle-blower protection, as well as forbidding the collection and use of data without our consent.

This is very timely. A number of my constituents have shared with me a few current examples that impact

people every day and reiterate that safeguards are lacking and that loss of privacy is getting out of hand. Most recently, 50 million users on Facebook were breached. That is now under review by Canada's Privacy Commissioner. There was Bell Canada back in January, where a data breach appears to have compromised about 100,000 customers' names and email addresses—thankfully, not their credit card or banking information. Uber Canada last November: 815,000 Canadian riders and drivers may have been affected as part of Uber's worldwide data breach; and a cyber security breach at Equifax left millions of people vulnerable.

All companies, including social media, must do better to protect people's privacy and personal data, and they can do this by becoming accountable and transparent about how they deal with our data.

I do want to say that, as important and timely as Bill 14 is, it was not consulted on, and I sincerely hope the member from Mississauga–Erindale will do a full consensus to ensure that everyone has their say and we do provide good legislation which would be in keeping with the spirit of this bill.

I support Bill 14 in principle and look forward to it moving forward. I support changes that will ensure that the system becomes user-centric so that we can both safeguard and benefit from our own data, however we choose.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you to the member from Mississauga–Erindale for bringing this issue forward.

1450

The last speaker raised the issue of consultation. In my discussions with the Information and Privacy Commissioner's office, I was informed that there was no consultation with respect to this bill, Bill 14, with that office. These are the experts. These are the legislative commissions that we pay lots of money for to actually make sure that our legislation is going to do what it needs to do. I am somewhat concerned that this bill isn't coming from the government and that it's actually coming forward in a private member's bill at a time that it isn't going anywhere because we're going into an election and this bill is probably not going to see the light of day before the next election.

I'm concerned because I heard that from the privacy commissioner's office today, but we also have a report from the privacy commissioner from 2016 that outlined the deficiencies in the various pieces of legislation as they impact governments and they impact public offices across this province. They made a number of recommendations back in 2016, almost two years ago, and they called upon the government to enact legislation that expressly authorizes information-sharing for policy and research purposes and provides a strong government-wide framework for data integration projects.

Mr. James J. Bradley: Conservation authority.

Ms. Cindy Forster: You're right, yes. The member from St. Catharines is absolutely right about that.

They said that the legislation is outdated. It's 30 years old and we've never gone back to review it, so before we start adding new pieces of legislation and fixing loopholes, we should go back and make sure that the legislation that currently exists is actually working for us. The measures that they say could be incorporated into this existing legislation include:

—additional investigation, order-making and audit powers for the IPC;

—mandatory breach notification and reporting—and I understand there are many breaches. Right within our own government, in our own government ministries, in our own government offices, there are numerous breaches;

—requirement for privacy impact assessments;

—requirements for de-identification;

—review and approval by an ethics review body;

—public notification of data integration projects; and

—rights of individuals affected by automated decision-making.

The members have talked about big data. Certainly, the IPC in their summary of their recommendations back in 2016 said that we need to ensure that we have the authority to actually collect and disclose personal information. De-identification protects against disclosure of individuals' identities but not against big data harms, which is what we've been seeing most recently.

We need to be aware of data fundamentalism, the belief that the correlation always implies causation and the numbers always represent the objective truth because they don't necessarily, and that individuals affected by automated decision-making have important rights.

While I certainly support the spirit of the bill coming forward, I think that it's a big piece of legislation for a private member's bill. It really is a piece of legislation that needs more than just us as legislators having a review of it. Have it come back here in the form of a government bill where we could have a fulsome debate on not only Bill 14 but the other pieces of legislation, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Personal Health Information Protection Act, which are all, as I said, 30 years outdated.

I also wanted to share with the members who are here today the fact that, in 2016, there were almost 1,600 access appeals, 10% higher than 2015; there were 537 health complaints, 17% over 2015; and 276 privacy complaints, just one more than in 2015.

The IPC has been working diligently to address these issues, but they say that they're finding it increasingly difficult because of new technology and all of those issues that they find themselves trying to deal with in today's world.

I would certainly ask that the government go back, have a look at the summary of these recommendations from this commission and make sure that we're reviewing these pieces of legislation at the same time that we're reviewing Bill 14.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. James J. Bradley: I want to commend the member, Mr. Takhar, for bringing forward the bill that we have this afternoon, which is very timely.

Some members have made reference to the fact that the Facebook scandal, if some people want to call it that, that is existing right now is worrying a lot of people that information is being obtained and being shared inappropriately with others.

The member has done a good deal of research to ensure that this bill covers all the territory that he wants it to, basing it, to a certain extent—and, I think, a large extent—on legislation which exists in the province of British Columbia.

I think we recognize that, while there's much benefit to the sharing of information, particularly when people are trying to obtain information in the public domain from various levels of government or government agencies, that's exceedingly important. There have been complaints over the years that that has been a major challenge.

What hasn't been dealt with as much is the obtaining and sharing of information that individuals happen to provide. Very basically, looking at information being obtained, they have cards now at Shoppers Drug Mart, which has now combined its card with Loblaws. People will say to you, "Why don't you have one of these cards? Because you get a discount; it's a points card." Well, some people may answer, "I don't use it because it provides someone else with information on my purchasing habits."

There are so many ways of obtaining information today that are available. While we may not object specifically to that entity or organization gaining that information, what we do object to is the sharing of that information.

The member's bill is quite comprehensive. I've read through its provisions, and it does deal with virtually every factor that might enter into the debate today.

I look at south of the border and the situation with Facebook. I see that they want to bring the head of Facebook before a legislative committee—in this case, I think, a committee of the House or the Senate in the United States—to explain how a breach of this kind can take place. It worries people, because we see now, with all of the ways of communicating electronically, the ability of people to influence elections, and that can happen anywhere. There's a case before the United States at the present time. It is alleged that Russia—and the allegations are backed with a lot of proof—either directly from the Russian government or from others on behalf of the Russian government, has used its influence to dictate who shall be elected President of the United States or in other races.

I think none of us here today in this House would want to think that some outside entity could affect the results of our particular election, but it can happen. It is available today.

What we want is for the people of the province to evaluate each of the platforms, evaluate the personalities,

evaluate the record of each of the political parties and then make a judgment which they believe to be in the interests of the people of Ontario.

What we don't want is outside information being obtained so that you can target specific individuals. That's hard to get away from. I know that's the modern way of conducting elections, and some people think that's very clever. I guess, to a certain extent, that is open for use. But I think we want to watch that it doesn't go too far, as we have seen in the case of Facebook.

1500

The member is concerned about people having knowledge of that information being obtained, the reasons for which the information is being obtained, by whom it's being obtained and, as important, with whom it happens to be shared.

This is a timely piece of legislation. I commend the member for bringing it forward. There are a lot of, let's say, perhaps more exciting bills that could be brought before the House, but often what you will find is that a bill of this nature, which doesn't have the glamour to go with it or won't be splashed over the front page of a newspaper, nevertheless has an impact on individuals within our province.

I know that he has outlined the provisions of the bill, so I won't necessarily go through them, but I will mention three or four things it does that I think are important.

It sets forth clear regulations for businesses in Ontario to follow in terms of personal information. I think it's important that businesses do that, because they have a vested interest in obtaining all kinds of information about any one of us.

It takes back jurisdiction from the federal government on personal information matters in the private sector. Clearly, the federal legislation is not impactful enough to solve the new circumstances that we face in all of our provinces. Three of the largest provinces—British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec—have moved forward with legislation in this regard.

It provides accountability for private information in the private sector.

Each of the provisions that are part of the bill is designed to be helpful to us in protecting information that shouldn't be accessed in the first place and to prevent that information about individuals in our society from being shared with others. It in no way prevents government from providing that information when asked by a freedom-of-information access request to be provided as it should. We have seen many cases, of course, where that should be done and will continue to be done.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonnell: I'm proud to rise today to speak to Bill 14, An Act with respect to the custody, use and disclosure of personal information.

Speaker, in this new information age and our reliance on it, our personal information is becoming more and more important to protect, as its misuse can prove to be simply disastrous for many people. Personal information

is rapidly becoming a personal commodity. Recent scandals involving social media platforms show how valuable personal data is and how important it is to make sure that personal information is only used with an individual's consent.

Speaker, the debate brings us further to the question of: Who retains ownership of the data—ourselves or the companies we gave it to?

I know that this bill is just a private member's bill, and I commend the member from Mississauga–Erindale for putting this important piece of legislation out, but it affects almost every organization and business in Ontario. It lacks the stakeholder consultation that a bill of this nature demands. While I support it at second reading, this bill needs extensive consultation in committee to ensure that we get this right. Its rapid introduction did not allow stakeholders to come forward and inform this House of the benefits and the pitfalls in this bill.

I would also like to comment that this bill does not reflect the current practices of this government, and that is unfortunate. I was approached by a not-for-profit organization in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry that is providing public services. They were ordered by the ministry to release the names and contact information of all their employees to another organization without consent of the employees themselves.

Speaker, this is just another example of the government saying one thing but quietly doing another. We've seen this over and over again, where organizations are threatened by this government to remain quiet or next year will be worse.

We looked at some of the whistle-blowing protection that's in it. We only have to remember back to the different scandals in the last House, the Ornge Air Ambulance and the gas plants, where employees were threatened with not releasing information or not making information public.

This bill does not apply to the government, and it's unfortunate because I think that really the government should be the leader in good behaviour, and we haven't quite seen that. I can just give an example of some of the private companies—one of the major restaurant chains—where their credit card information could simply be—the unit could be stolen and utilized. We saw that happen just in the village of Lancaster at home, where somebody came in after hours, broke in, stole the box and utilized the credit information fraudulently. It's that easy to do.

Just yesterday, actually, I myself got an email from PayPal asking if I had made a certain purchase, which I didn't make. When you looked at it, they asked for information so they could take back, I guess, the purchase. But when you look at it, it was just a scheme to get your name, your birthdate and your social insurance number. The individual has got to remain very diligent so he doesn't fall victim to one of these scams, because people want this information for a reason. I'm sure that, yesterday, I was probably one of millions of people around the world that got the same email suggesting that there was something here that I may want to provide information so they can stop—so, verify that these emails are legit.

This legislation highlights just how important this information is and where it should go with it. I look forward to this bill reaching committee. We support it at second reading.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's a privilege to take my place on behalf of the good people of Algoma–Manitoulin.

I do have to say, I have a question for the Clerks. This must be the thickest private member's bill that I've seen since I've been here, and I've been here for about seven years. I'm just puzzled as to all of this material that we have to go through. I'm just wondering why it's not a government bill, but I'll get to that in some of my comments.

I think many of us in this chamber are surprised by the private member's bill's size, introduced by the member from Mississauga–Erindale. Bill 14, An Act with respect to the custody, use and disclosure of personal information, is a fairly large legislation for a private member's bill. The intent of it, from what I understand, is to fill the significant gap in the current provincial privacy laws. With that in mind, I ask myself, why, again, this is a private member's bill and not a government bill, because it is quite significant and was quite lengthy to go through.

Even though we had little time to review this bill, there seems to be some good things in there. It absolutely seems like a bill that I'm willing to consider and support. Protecting the privacy of personal information is something that just makes common sense, and it looks like the bill is aimed towards doing just that.

However, I hope the member from Mississauga–Erindale, as well as the government, can explain to me why they chose to introduce this bill in this format, and why now. This is a long, complicated bill, and time was a constraint. Obviously, I wouldn't want it to become a law before we all took a closer look at the wording of this bill. Further research could really be done, but again, we were under the gun on this one, especially because something like rules around privacy should be addressed with a government bill, backed by the ministry, with all the supports and the resources that come with it.

There are a lot of exceptions and exclusions in this bill, and we wouldn't want to create a law which has unintended consequences. This is not a critique on the member and the work he has done. I'm sure his staff worked very diligently in order to assist him, in order to provide a good bill, especially coming from the member. But the bill would have had some unintended consequences, too, and this bill is of doubt, especially coming from this government.

I would like to sit down and take the time to study this bill and the situation of privacy law in Ontario, because it is absolutely a timely discussion to have with what we have learned, especially recently, with what we have seen in the media in regard to the happenings with Facebook. I think we can all agree that we need to understand what the gaps are that the Ontario government can and should fill in the matter of protecting privacy.

Will we overlap the federal privacy laws with this bill? There's one question. Should we overlap the federal privacy laws with new legislation? That's another. How can Ontario improve the protection of personal information for everybody? That's another.

1510

There are a lot of questions that we should have asked before, and we are asking now, not only to the experts, but also to the general public who are going to be affected by this potential law. That's why I think this should have been a government bill and not a private member's bill. Asking these questions is a government exercise, and I'm afraid that the Liberal government is not taking privacy issues seriously enough.

Like I've said, we all saw what happened with Facebook and Cambridge Analytica. I didn't see anything in this bill that would actually address this problem or anything of that sort. It's important that we ask people what they expect and how they want to be protected.

Today, we have a very different relationship with personal information. More and more we care in different ways, and it's important that these changes for Ontarians are done properly, with a broad range of consultation. I don't want us to pass something that is simply a bureaucratic or regulatory burden, and then top it off with everything having unintended consequences because of this particular bill.

If the intent is to better protect the personal information, I'm supportive. However, I'm not sure what this bill is doing and what problems it solves. We are in need of better and more adaptive privacy laws, but I don't think this bill will do very much towards that. However, I want to note that with this bill, the Information and Privacy Commissioner would be responsible for monitoring how the act is administered and ensuring that its proposals are achieved.

I think it is a good thing, but will the commissioner have more resources? And is this bill actually clear enough for them to understand, for them to do the actual job?

Again, I commend the member and his staff for having done the work on this bill. I think this is also a good idea, but if it's going to fill in the gaps, I think there's a lot more that we can do.

I support the intent of the bill, Speaker. I'm going to be looking at it and hopefully studying it even more because, let's face it, with what recently happened over the news, personal privacy information has come to a heightened concern with the public right now. In everything that we do, let's not duplicate it and let's not create more obstacles so that more legislation can be created in order to protect personal information.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: I am gathering that there is a consensus in the House that there's merit in this bill, that it's going to go forward on second reading and get some of the examination that a bill of this scale and scope deserves.

I have to commend the member for Mississauga-Erindale. He has got a great wealth of experience in this, not merely in his time here at the Legislature, but also in his private business dealings and as the chief financial officer of the Peel District School Board. He's bringing a world of business experience and some hands-on experience to the management of information.

If I talk about a product, most people are going to visualize a packaged good: iron, ore, wheat, oil, soybeans. These are all things that have attributes, such as size, shape, colour or weight—things that are visible. But information is now a product. By that, I mean data. It's something that does have definition. It has boundaries; it has a lifespan. And if it's something that's important, then you have to ask yourself: Is it the Wild West out there in the private sector?

The member's bill points out that the federal freedom of information and privacy act—or FIPPA, as it's often called—manages the protection of information for industries regulated at the federal level. He uses as examples banks, airlines, shipping companies, railways and telecommunications companies because of the fact that their commercial activity crosses borders. He points out that the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, or PIPEDA, has taken effect in British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec, where those provinces have taken back some degree of jurisdiction in this particular area by legislating their own personal information private sector laws.

So it isn't something that the member is thinking up out of nowhere. This is actually something that does exist in other provinces, and what he's trying to do is take the best practices that have been established in other provinces and bring them home here.

Why is this important? Well, looking back only to the start of 2017, let me just run some names of companies by you: Facebook, Equifax, Yahoo, eBay, Target and Sony PlayStation. What have all of those got in common? Massive breaches of data. Why? Because there aren't the safeguards in the private sector to do exactly what the member is suggesting right here today.

This is a very comprehensive bill. What he's suggesting here, in effect, is the ISO 9000 of data management. It's a good idea. It's a discipline that the custodian of large bodies of private sector data has to develop, think it through.

Looking at private sector purveyors of data: Your pizza delivery company has a pretty good idea of what time you have dinner. It can make a pretty good guess about whether or not you're vegetarian. The taxi company that you deal with has a pretty good idea, over a span of several years, whether or not you're home. Your information service provider knows what sites you've visited. They know what time you log on. They know a great deal about what your interests are.

As a customer of those, if you say, "I think it's time you destroyed old data"—do you have that right, right now? You don't. In fact, a lot of the information that you give out in the normal course of doing commercial trans-

actions with private companies is kept, catalogued, indexed and retained forever.

This bill asks: What should be the practice here? Should this be something where the owner of the data has to listen to the object of the data—in other words, you, the customer—when you say, “I think it’s time you deleted old data”?

What should be the best practices sector by sector or industry by industry? How should someone be able to ask for the data that you have? Under what conditions can you refuse? Under what conditions must you accept? How long should it take? What should it cost? These are all things raised by this bill in a thoughtful, organized and methodical manner. These are part of the reasons that this bill has merit and really does deserve to go on.

The thing with data is, if data costs you nothing, then that means that you are the product. When we use Facebook, Yahoo, Hotmail, Gmail, we all think it’s free. Well, the service itself is free, but everything that you put in it constitutes the assembly of a very complex, detailed product, and that’s all governed by the private sector. That’s the Wild West.

What this member’s bill asks—and it’s a very large, comprehensive bill—is: What would a reasonable person acting in a rational manner consider to be good business practices that are fair to the subject of the data—you—and fair to the owner of the data in terms of managing it and protecting your privacy as the contributor to that body of data, and under what circumstances should you be able to access it, amend it and demand its deletion?

This is an act whose time has come. This is a bill that should go forward. This is something we should study at committee and consider very seriously.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: We’re here today speaking on a bill called the Personal Information Protection Act.

It’s interesting; we’re going into an election period, and we all know we’re not going to see too many bills get to committee, let alone get passed. We heard the member from Welland as well as other members here in the House ask why this wasn’t a government bill, saying that perhaps the government should have been working on this. They’ve certainly had almost 15 years to worry about the privacy of information.

We’ve heard about the breach of data—Facebook was recently in the news, as well as the PC Optimum card. When it was amalgamated with Loblaws there were problems and people lost their points. They were certainly upset about that. We’ve heard about all kinds of problems from people with various programs and breaches of data.

I’m sure people here, like me, have gone on to Google to research appliances or something like that, and the next thing you know those ads are popping up when you log on to Facebook. So you know that the companies are out there and are able to somehow follow you around and see what you’re interested in and use that information to promote. It’s not unlike companies using other informa-

tion to promote, but the questions become: How far should they go with this data? How can they share the data? How do they store the data and ensure that it’s safe? And how long do they keep the data?

1520

In the bill, there are certainly things that need to be discussed. Whistle-blower protection, consent and the consequences need to be discussed. I didn’t hear too much about which private industries were consulted and what their opinions were on it. I think that’s of concern because we certainly want companies to want to locate their head offices in Ontario.

We all know, Madam Speaker, and I’m surprised nobody really mentioned it, but the cyber-world is a global world. It’s not just Ontario, or even just Canada or just the continent. What we do here in Ontario—we might have the best of intentions, but it’s not so easy when data is being stored outside of Ontario by companies that don’t necessarily do much business in Ontario.

I want to speak more on a personal note as the PC critic for children, youth and families. We saw at committee that there was grave concern from the public about privacy in the child welfare system, because they now have uploaded the data on—most of the children’s aid societies are moving forward with it; some have completed it. They’ve moved forward with what we call CPIN, which is a program to allow the child welfare agencies to share information.

Obviously, that’s very important, Madam Speaker, because if a family is of concern to child welfare authorities and then they move to another region where there is a different society, we need to ensure that the information is being shared, just like information is being shared by our law enforcement and information was supposed to be shared by our health care professionals through eHealth. That didn’t work out as well as we wanted. But the fact is that there are children who age out of care—they’re no longer in care—and they raised concerns about what is going to be done with their data once they’re no longer in care. They are very worried about it.

The minister was asked to come to committee to address some of the concerns. That didn’t happen, unfortunately.

Now, here we are, not even a year after the bill was implemented to update the child welfare system, and here we hear of two children’s aid service agencies that fell victim to cyber-ransomware attacks. One was the Children’s Aid Society of Oxford County. They paid a \$5,000 ransom to regain access to their sensitive data after a malware attack on their local servers. You can say that that’s not directly related to CPIN and you would be right, but the fact is, they were trying to upload their data from their present system to CPIN and it wasn’t a secure server, so they lost their data and they had to pay to get it back.

There was another agency, Family and Children’s Services of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville, which saw a ransom message flash on their computer screens demanding \$60,000 when they tried to access their database.

They ended up negotiating through their insurance and they were able to deal with it.

Madam Speaker, we cannot implement a new CPIN system without realizing that these children's aid societies are not computer-savvy necessarily and that the government is required to help them ensure that the data is protected.

So I'm really happy to hear more about what the members here in the House have to say about this bill. I think that we certainly are concerned about our own privacy. Now that we're going to an election time, we're all collecting data, I'm sure: identifying our voters, our supporters and our donors. We are certainly required to ensure that that data is safe, so we must make sure that we respect everybody's data.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Mississauga–Erindale to wrap up.

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: Madam Speaker, I am actually very thankful to all the members who participated in the discussion. I'm especially thankful to my colleagues from Mississauga–Streetsville and St. Catharines for their input and making the case, on my behalf, for the bill.

Let me say this: When we started with this bill, we actually talked to the privacy commissioner of Ontario. I had a meeting with him in my office, and we said to him, "Can you tell us if this bill is needed?" We also asked him, "What are the other bills of this kind in the rest of the country?" and if there are any recommendations that they could suggest to improve those bills. That was the basis for the bill. That's why, at the end, we concluded that the bill from British Columbia was the one that maybe we should be using as a model.

Anyway, Madam Speaker, there are few things I can would like to say: One, the information is being collected, whether it's being collected when you know it or it's being collected otherwise. This bill basically says that consent should be sought.

The second thing this bill does is that it says that the information, if it needs to be disclosed, should be disclosed only for the purpose for which the information is collected.

The third thing it does is that it talks about how, if the information that is collected is about an individual or a private person, if the person needs to change that information, they should be able to change it and ask for the correction to be made.

The information that needs to be collected should be based on the principle of the reasonable person test: Somebody should be able to say, "Yes. This information is needed for this purpose."

The other thing is that it also puts some onuses on business if they are collecting information: how to store the information, how to destroy the information and how quickly they should act when somebody asks for changes.

I think this bill is very timely. We need it at this point of time. We should really move ahead with this.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

MAGNA CARTA DAY ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE JOUR DE LA GRANDE CHARTE

Mrs. Munro moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act to proclaim Magna Carta Day / Projet de loi 4, Loi proclamant le Jour de la Grande Charte.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Today it is my pleasure to rise for the third time to present my private member's bill, the Magna Carta Day Act.

The Magna Carta is a key document on which the foundations of our democracy rest. David Frum put it best: "When you speak your mind without fear, worship God as you think right, enjoy your property in security, or enter a courtroom confident that you cannot be punished until your guilt is proved—then you are standing at the end of a story that begins with these words written in Latin on parchment so long ago."

That quote can be found on the back of Dr. Carolyn Harris's book, *Magna Carta and Its Gifts to Canada*. I'm very honoured to introduce her to you this afternoon: Dr. Harris. I'm obviously very happy to have her in the gallery today to watch this debate, though I hope it is a chorus of agreement about the parchment on which our democracy stands.

I would also like to take a moment to thank fellow members of provincial Parliament for standing to discuss this historically significant document with me. No matter what party banner we run under come election time and no matter what caucus we sit in today, I think we can all agree that there is much to celebrate in the Magna Carta.

I would also be remiss not to mention Leonard and Suzy Rodness, who, although they are unable to join us on such short notice, are here in spirit. They played a leading role in bringing the physical Magna Carta to Canada, for which we should all be grateful.

I can't say that I expected a third opportunity to introduce and share this bill, but if there's one piece of good news that I am able to take from the government's decision to briefly prorogue, it is that new ballot slots were drawn and mine came up third.

I relied heavily on Dr. Harris's book, *Magna Carta and Its Gifts to Canada*, in my research on this important topic. As I mentioned earlier, we are lucky to have her in the gallery today. I encourage those of you who would like to know the full story to read her book when you have the chance.

The bill we have before us asks the assembly to recognize June 15 as Magna Carta Day. The reason for that is simple: Magna Carta stands out as a unique

example of men working together for the greater good. While its rights were laid out as expectations to be followed by specific social groups, such as the barons and the knights, it was flexible enough to include commoners as time went on; it also recognized women.

1530

But today there is a threat to the principles of Magna Carta in a way never imagined by its authors. Yes, these rights still exist in the legal sense, but what about in the day-to-day operations of public life? The right to be innocent until proven guilty is being drowned by social media and the court of public opinion, an unaccountable social media mob that can destroy in minutes, if not seconds.

You may wonder why, 800 years later, Magna Carta still matters. Eight hundred years later, why does it matter that a king agreed to meet his most influential barons on a field in England to sign a document that he intended to tear up?

It matters that circumstances prevented King John from tearing it up. It matters that those nobles made sure that the English population knew the principles contained in the document and that they would provide a protection for rights and responsibilities for generations to follow; that those principles would come to all parts of the world, including America, France, and the Commonwealth, including Canada, of course.

Eight hundred years later, it still matters; however, 800 years is a very long time. The wealthy were starting to build their homes from stone; the poor lived in homes with thatched roofs, and fires were common. People couldn't read; they couldn't write. Many children did not reach adulthood, due to illness or accident. If you weren't a member of the church hierarchy, you were one of the few wealthy nobles, but more likely than not, you were a peasant or a gamin.

King John agreed to sign, believing he could nullify the work done by a relatively small group of lords a short while later, but this was not to be. As the principles took hold amongst people of all social classes, the ideas were embraced. Judges made sure that people understood the meaning and the implication of the various concepts. While at the time it was not divided into clauses, it was clear what ideas were to be found and, later, what ideas were here to stay.

But now there is a new message from Magna Carta for each of us: the clear importance of innocence until proven guilty. While today there may be Canadians who do not know what Magna Carta is, I think we can all agree that we know what it means to live under its influence. The concept of equality before the law is a Canadian value. In a world overwhelmed by political instability, corruption and war, the stability of Magna Carta shines brightly. As nations define human rights in their own jurisdictions, Magna Carta informs that process locally and at the international level.

Magna Carta has been interpreted by many throughout its long history. It has had an influence on millions of people. The basic principles have not changed: No one is

above the law; there is a right to due process and a right to trial by peers. I began by asking, "Eight hundred years later, why does it matter?" Today, there are millions of people who don't have these rights.

The purpose of this bill is twofold. First, it is to remind people of the principles of Magna Carta and how important it is to protect these from neglect and abuse. Second, this bill recognizes the universality of Magna Carta, as it has influenced constitutions and legal thinking in many countries around the world.

I want to thank you for joining me here today to discuss this bill and for your support of Canada's democratic principles.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): The member for Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Today it is my honour to stand in this Legislature as one of 107 MPPs elected to serve this province and all the people who live here. After June, there will be 124 members of this Legislature. Speaker, though your chair is pretty fancy and usually your raiments are stately, you are not who I serve. I serve the people of Oshawa.

We are here because of many challenges to authority, challenges to the monarchy and challenges to the system throughout history. Specifically today, we are debating the reintroduced private member's bill to make June 15 of every year Magna Carta Day.

"Magna Carta" is Latin for "Great Charter," and it is one of the most important documents in political history. It has been described as England's greatest export, first drawn up and signed by King John on June 15, 1215, to make peace between the unpopular king and a group of rebel barons, limiting the powers of the monarchy under the Angevin kings and, in particular, during John's reign.

It was the first document forced onto a king of England by his subjects with the objective of protecting their privileges and limiting his powers. The Magna Carta stands as a document defending and declaring the rule of law. It tells the story of noble barons who fought against the cruel tyrant King John, in defence of English liberty.

It must be recognized, along with that story, that the 99% from that time was comprised of serfs and the peasantry, who were not free to fight for liberty. They were the masses, oppressed by the nobles and the system, who did not benefit from the Magna Carta initially.

Also, around the world some communities did not live as serfs and did not live with owners, so they may not have needed a written document outlining the basics of democratic ideals. We shouldn't always point to ourselves as the only model for civilization and community structure.

Not all important documents are regal, written documents. Some were treaties and some, like the Dish With One Spoon wampum belt covenant, were agreements among our First Nations and allied nations. Here at Queen's Park, we are on sacred land, where historical covenants and agreements haven't been respected or honoured, and we must strive to recognize and work for

meaningful reconciliation with all our relations. Remember that not all important history is written on parchment.

However, the Magna Carta stands as a written flash-point that has lit the fires of challenge and justice, inspiring the truly oppressed around the world. The Magna Carta represents equality before the law, trial by peers, immunity from illegal imprisonment and taxation only by the consent of the citizenry.

Speaker, I'd like to go back in history a little further, to William the Conqueror and his youngest son, King Henry I. At that time, only a noble widow had control of her property and marital status. King Henry I ensured that widows of knights and barons would receive an inheritance and the freedom to choose whether they remarried or not. However, King Richard and younger brother King John wanted more income, ignored the protections set by King Henry, and confiscated widows' inheritances who refused to marry friends and supporters of the king. This upset the barons and nobles because it upset the social hierarchy.

Enshrined in the Magna Carta are rights for women. Though limited to noble widows, clause 7 ensures a widow's pension, and clause 8 states, "No widow shall be compelled to marry, so long as she wishes to remain without a husband."

Interestingly, my very first private member's bill, Bill 98, also protected widows' pensions from insurance companies trying to claw them back after their husbands had died of occupational workplace diseases. It's interesting that the more things change, the more they really stay the same.

I'd also like to take us back, in my own history in this Legislature—not quite as far back as the Magna Carta, but it still seems like a lifetime ago—to my very first day at this Legislature as an elected member of provincial Parliament. It was at our orientation back in June 2014, learning the building, learning the ropes and appreciating the history that we were stepping into. I remember, as we were walking through these halls, there were women wearing dresses and hats from the early 1900s walking towards us, silently walking along the halls. It was a very surreal moment. I asked the other new MPPs, "Can you see them?" And they could, because they weren't ghosts remembering these halls. They were actors and extras filming a Murdoch Mysteries episode. They were re-enacting a suffragettes' rally on the steps of Queen's Park, demanding the right to vote. So there I was, walking alongside suffragettes at Queen's Park, 100 years later, as a woman taking her place as an elected member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

1540

White women were allowed to vote only 100 years ago, in 1917. Racialized women, group by group, had to fight to be allowed in the 1940s, and it wasn't until 1954 that indigenous women achieved the right to vote.

When we look around this room, we see that we still have a ways to go to see elected representation that is reflective of our diverse province. I wonder how many folks in positions of elected power are the descendants of

barons and nobles. I don't think that I am, because my mother used to tell me that we were the descendants of lowland Scottish sheep thieves—but I digress.

I am glad when we talk about democracy, but I'm even more glad when we challenge that democracy and when we actually delve into it to say that democracy is not just about challenging power; it is about who has that power.

The real story, still being written, is about who isn't allowed access to that power. The Magna Carta started the journey to our Eurocentric version of democracy, but it cannot stop there. We must never be a part of a government system that denies justice or access to human rights. And we can't just point to the Magna Carta; we must direct it and target injustice.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: It's really great to stand in the House today and to speak about the foundation of democracy as it relates to the context in England. The Magna Carta, or the Great Charter—it's really a wonderful time for us to reflect on that and the principles of democracy and inclusion.

I think that we have to recognize that in the beginning, the Magna Carta applied to just a very few portions of the population in 1215. It's really a reminder that, even when something is started, there's a potential for it to grow and to spread. I think that that's what we are all benefiting from today, because some of the Great Charter's values and principles are reflected even in our own charter today. Our government is always committed to strengthening and enriching democracy and democratic growth in our province.

I want to thank the member from York-Simcoe for bringing forward this very important bill. I've had an opportunity during my time here to work very, very closely with her, first on the ORPP as we were looking to strengthen retirement security for all Ontarians—and we know that that has led to the expansion of the CPP, which will benefit all Canadians, particularly those in the future.

I'm reflecting on the fact that I was first elected on August 1, 2013. That day sticks out in my mind because that was Emancipation Day. When I visit schools in my riding, as I regularly do, I talk about that day and I share that information with young people, because it's important that we remember those struggles that were really hard-fought-for and that we recognize that discrimination and intolerance are something we have to do away with in our society.

Just yesterday, March 21, we celebrated the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. That day is important because, in 1960, police officers in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people who were rising up against a divisive regime of apartheid.

Visiting South Africa and seeing the townships, visiting the museums and looking at that history, you recognize that democracy is something that is fought for. It is something that we earn and that we have to fight

hard to keep and to make sure that everyone in our society here in Ontario is participating fully and completely in the benefits of our society. That is why our government has set up the Anti-Racism Directorate, led by my colleague the minister responsible for the Anti-Racism Directorate, the Honourable Michael Coteau. It's important to have those offices that can dig deeply into our society and say, "Who is not being included fully? Whose rights are being violated in our inclusive society?"

This historic document truly does remind us that the true power in any democracy like ours resides in the people. It resides very much in the will of all of the people. When we are in this House and have this privilege to stand and to pass laws and to develop policy, we have to keep that at the centre of our decision-making and recognize that the greatest aspect of our country—here in Ontario and right across—is the fact that we live in a society that is free, that we live in a society that enshrines in our Charter those freedoms, and that we can build on what was done in the past; but we have to do it in a way that reflects everyone's rights and everyone's values. That is, indeed, a privilege.

I want to say thank you again to the member from York-Simcoe for bringing this forward and giving us an opportunity in June to celebrate the Magna Carta and to really expand on it, to talk about what it means to us today in our society: those ideals of freedom and full inclusion for all people and how we must continue to fight for that and we must continue to value that.

I really want to thank the member from Oshawa for bringing up the First Nations and indigenous peoples of this land. We know that we have the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that looks at some of the injustices that have taken place over the years. But it doesn't stop there. It talks about, "What is our journey forward?" Ontario's response is the Journey Together and how we reconcile with indigenous people and how we reflect a society that respects the original stewards of this land.

I am very proud to stand here as the member from Scarborough-Guildwood, elected on Emancipation Day, first and foremost, and to be able to speak on behalf of my community, having this enormous privilege to make a difference in our community, and to really live in a country that is free, that is inclusive. But we must continue to work hard to make it the best place that it can be, and that's a responsibility that we all share.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): The member for Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to thank my colleague from York-Simcoe for putting forward this bill to commemorate Magna Carta Day on June 15. Unfortunately, it's her third time putting it, but it's fortunate for us because we get to debate and learn a bit of history.

Lady Munro, as we affectionately call her, was a high school teacher of history. I'm going to say a piece of history about her, which was that we just celebrated her as the longest-serving female legislator in Ontario history, and her portrait now hangs on the wall on the first

floor. Magna Carta is Latin for the Great Charter. It's a revolutionary document that forms the bedrock of constitutional monarchies, such as Ontario and Canada. In 1215, King John sealed the Magna Carta, limiting his own powers. He painted himself into a corner, as it were. He signed a document which, before he signed the document, it would have been within his powers to rip up the document. But once he signed the document, he was sort of stuck with it, even though he regretted it almost immediately. It, of course, enshrines the supremacy of law and reason.

We understand here, and we say it often, but I think we have to remind ourselves that nobody is above the law—not the king, not the Premier, not the Prime Minister. We have seen some instances with the Prime Minister himself getting a bit of a slap on the wrist for breaching some of Canada's laws.

1550

We all have the right to sue the government, to appeal rulings, and it's one of the bedrocks of democracy that we have the right to fair justice and process. Of course, we talk about democracy, but it's much more than just voting every four years. It's an ongoing process, and we have to ensure that we protect it.

Unfortunately, democracy is fragile. We have seen some polls recently where millennials were asked if it was important to them or not, and they did not rate democracy as particularly necessary or important to them. That's quite scary. I think it's quite scary to all of us here, and it just reminds me of the expression, "you don't know what you have until it's gone". I'm quite sure those millennials would miss democracy if they lost it.

We know that the Magna Carta was written on parchment. I was thinking today about the Dead Sea scrolls, which were very moving for me to see, and they were also written on parchment. They were written in 400 BCE, and they were found in caves near the Dead Sea, where it's so dry that they were well preserved.

It really brings back, I think, to all of us, when we read about the Magna Carta or we go to see the museums that had the Dead Sea scrolls, and you go to see the history—it just hits you in the face that people just like you and I, Mr. Speaker, lived so many years ago and were thoughtful, even without all of the modern conveniences that we have today—the research. Most of us are old enough to remember that before we were able to google everything, we actually had to go to a library and sometimes look things up on microfiche—I'm sure that if you asked the millennials, some of them don't even know what that is—and how hard it was to do research, when we had a university project, to get the information.

Now we have information at our fingertips, and I hope that we all appreciate all the information that's available to us. If anybody is watching at home and they want more information on the Magna Carta, there are books, as we heard, to read—and let us know what your thoughts are, in terms of how important democracy and due process are to you.

This bill, of course, isn't just an act to commemorate some day in history. It's a look back on how we got here,

and, as a democratically elected Legislative Assembly in our own constitutional monarchy of Ontario, how important the Magna Carta is to all of us.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): The member for Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: First of all, I want to thank the member for York–Simcoe for bringing this bill back. I think it's a bill of consequence, talking about our democratic heritage in the English-speaking world.

Mr. Paul Miller, from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, spoke to this issue in 2015, and I want to borrow from his comments, because I thought he actually delivered this issue, this statement, with a great deal of justice.

As you are all well aware, “the Magna Carta is part of Canada’s cultural and political heritage. It laid the foundation for the common-law legal system and was a direct influence on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is a document wrapped in story, legend and not just a few myths.”

Actually, I want address myths for a moment. For my sins, I was, for a long time, a property manager in the housing co-op sector. Cats and pets were always a big issue. Whenever we tried to bring forward issues dealing with cats roaming free, members would cite the Magna Carta and a section that I can’t find in it saying that cats will be allowed to roam free. We were told that no co-op bylaw could ever supersede the Magna Carta.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Read Adlai Stevenson—he was the governor of Illinois in 1952—about cats.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Now, there is an interesting literary allusion, a very interesting one—cats, and Adlai Stevenson in the 1950s.

However, I digress.

“The appeal of the Magna Carta lies not in its specific details”—cats or not—“many of which have lost relevance with the passage of time. No, it lies in its unshackled defence and declaration of the rule of law.”

“There are two general narratives about the Magna Carta, narratives that have played out over the last 800 years. The first is that of the establishment. It praises gradual reform, the slow extension of liberties and the gradual encroachment of the citizenry upon the sovereign power of the king. It tells of noble barons who fought the good fight in defence of English liberty against the cruel and capricious tyrant King John.”

And, apparently, “there is some truth in this. The rights won by the nobility in the Magna Carta paved the way for the parliamentary system, were eventually extended to all persons, not just free men”—and I underline “men”—“and in the 17th were invoked to check Charles I’s attempt to establish an absolute monarchy.

“But there is a darker side to the story too. The nobility were oppressed by the king, but they were the oppressors of the whole English society,” as my colleague from Oshawa alluded to earlier. “The serfs and peasants who lived under the nobility’s arbitrary power received little from the Magna Carta, initially, at least, for the Magna Carta was, in its day, a charter” for the top

1%, the well-connected. “To the oppressed 99% of English society, the nobles said, ‘Liberty for me, but not for thee.’”

“That brings me to the second story of the Magna Carta. In this story, the Magna Carta has inspired the truly oppressed around the world. For eight centuries, the Magna Carta has fired the hearts and minds of those who seek justice in the face of tyranny and exploitation. The oppressed of the world have taken the Magna Carta as a totem in their demands for equality before the law, trial by their peers, immunity from illegal imprisonment and taxation only by the consent of the citizenry.

“During the English Civil War, the Levellers drew on the Magna Carta’s promise of equality before the law as grounds for an equal and classless society. It inspired the American revolutionaries and abolitionists alike. It influenced the Chartist movement in 19th-century England, which sought one man/one vote, no property qualification and the secret ballot.” If they’d gone just another step further, one woman/one vote, I think they would have been pretty close to where we had to be.

“Nelson Mandela cited the Magna Carta in his defence at the Rivonia trial. He lived in an unjust society under a tyrannical government that denied the rule of law by denying the equality of the people it was meant to serve. Apartheid in South Africa denied the promises of the Magna Carta.

“And in the 21st century, when governments defend unlawful detention in the name of security, the writ of habeas corpus is the means by which the promises of the Magna Carta must be fulfilled.

“Human rights are still being denied and trampled on in many corners of the world. We in Ontario and Canada cannot claim an unblemished record. For as long as governments act above the law, act arbitrarily and deny justice for their peoples, the Magna Carta will retain its significance.”

Again, my thanks to the member for bringing this forward as a reminder of the bedrock of the principles that we put forward for establishment of the operation of a democratic society.

“We in the House are tasked with drafting the law, the government ... is tasked with executing the law, but none of us here are above that law. We are its servants. Governments must be subject to the law, and true democracy cannot exist without respect, indeed reverence, for the rule of law. That is why we call for the highest standards in this House and in this province.”

With that, Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to address the issue, and I again congratulate the member.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: “No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgment of his equals or by the law of the land.

“To no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice.”

At the outset, of course, I would commend our honourable colleague from York–Simcoe for bringing forward this motion to celebrate the Magna Carta and its foundational role in the foundation of democracy and justice and the rule of law for all.

I have to say that I must first of all thank Mr. Terence Patrick O'Dwyer Bredin, my Latin teacher at Upper Canada College. I did try to go through the 63 clauses, most of them in Latin. I probably would require a dictionary to kind of make it through. But in that document, there is much to be celebrated, and much, of course, that echoes in the corridors of justice and the legal frameworks on which all of us rest.

It reminds me, Speaker, for example, as you may recall, that Martin Luther King said something very famous, which is perhaps made even more famous by a quotation by Barack Hussein Obama, who said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Occasionally, it bends the other way, unfortunately, in these days, in this age of Trump.

1600

I think it's very important that our colleague from York–Simcoe has not only brought this document forward to our attention so that we must once again reaffirm these principles of honour, of dignity, of respect for the other, for the rule of law and justice, but we must guard against the slow, potential slippage away from these very principles.

I do, with respect, remind the honourable House that, despite the possession in all the world's galleries and Parliaments of such noble documents and noble, lofty symbols, we did have a 500-year interlude of Western colonialism, the Atlantic slave trade and the near annihilation of indigenous cultures. There's something strange, I guess, about the human mind that no matter what our lofty sentiments are on paper, we still need to have human beings to reaffirm and literally reinvigorate that same sentiment, so that those principles of law and justice and honour and dignity and rule of law may once again continue to rule and inspire and inform our daily judgments and our daily actions.

With that, Speaker, I would simply congratulate, as I said, our colleague from York–Simcoe, and I will certainly look forward to Dr. Harris's book.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's a pleasure to rise and speak to my colleague from York–Simcoe's private member's bill, the Magna Carta Day Act. I find it telling that she says that this is the third time she has brought forward this particular private member's bill, and perhaps three times is the charm. So I give her points for persistence.

The bill, as we've discussed, would proclaim June 15 as Magna Carta Day. These rights include the rights to justice and a fair trial. I don't want to go over a lot of what other speakers have talked about, but celebrating the history of democracy and creating opportunities to teach Ontarians about our democratic history is a great idea, and I'm pleased that the member from York–Simcoe has decided to reintroduce this legislation.

I'm struck by the serendipity of the member from York–Simcoe introducing legislation to commemorate an important milestone for democracy when, frankly, she herself represents a milestone for Ontario's democracy, being the longest-serving female member of Parliament in Ontario's history. For the record, I asked the table to share with me the Parliaments that Ms. Munro has served in: the 36th, the 37th, the 38th, the 39th, the 40th and the 41st Parliaments—four Premiers. Congratulations.

Applause.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: A well-deserved honour.

In Dufferin–Caledon, I often visit classrooms to teach students about provincial government and my role as their MPP. In my presentation, I often begin with a then-and-now photo. One of the photos, of course, is a black-and-white of the early parliamentarians of this very chamber; and then, of course, I do a photo of today's Parliament. I always ask, "What's the difference? What do you see?" It doesn't take very long for the students to figure out that there are no females in that original photo. So I think that we have to remember some of our history and remind people that it was only 74 years ago that Ontario's first female member of Parliament was elected—and I don't mean to suggest that was the member from York–Simcoe. It absolutely was not.

But we have now, in all three parties, capable and committed women working in their communities. The member from York–Simcoe is part of the growing number of women who have served their communities in this Legislature. As a legislator, she has served as a parliamentary assistant to the Premier, government whip, sat on numerous committees, proposed private member's bills and continues to serve her community with dedication, integrity and grace.

It was an honour to attend the ceremony on February 28 for the MPP from York–Simcoe's portrait unveiling as she joined the Remarkable Assembly. The Remarkable Assembly exhibit showcases Ontario women leaders. It's so important for the young people of our province to see the substantial contributions female leaders have made in their communities. So, in the spirit of celebrating our democratic history, I congratulate MPP Munro on over two decades of service to the people of Ontario and trailblazing the path for future and current politicians.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Hillier: It is indeed a pleasure to speak to Bill 4 today, Magna Carta Day Act. But before I speak to the bill, I have been listening to debate. I want to thank all the members for all their comments and, of course, thank the member from York–Simcoe for reintroducing this bill once again in front of the House. As she mentioned, this is another reintroduction because the last one died on the order table with the prorogation.

I would encourage the members opposite, the members of the Liberal government, to consider not only that we get speedy passage at second reading of this bill today, but also to consider having unanimous consent and a motion to give this bill third reading expeditiously. I

would hope that the government would consider that, because undoubtedly, this will be the last bill introduced by the member from York-Simcoe in this House. We all know that she will not be seeking re-election this time around, so she will not have another opportunity to introduce Magna Carta, unless, of course, the government is planning on proroguing once again before the writ in May. So, let's give some careful consideration and hopefully we'll see this bill pass third reading very shortly.

I do want to say, in Ontario and in Canada, every citizen has rights. They have the rights to express themselves freely, to freely associate with whoever they choose; you are presumed innocent until proven guilty, and you cannot be thrown in jail without proper and due process. You are granted the power to choose your political representatives and to dictate the laws you must abide by and the taxes you pay.

These rights are not given to us out of courtesy or good manner, but rather, they are the long-standing traditions and rights that were revealed to all of us through the Magna Carta, sealed some 800 years ago. That document is the foundation of the form of government we inherited from the British during the founding of our country, and it is the criterion by which our society has developed.

The Magna Carta has been the guiding light and inspiration for not only those fighting for liberty and justice here at home, but in countless struggles around the world and throughout time. The fact that the rights set forth in the Magna Carta have survived for so long and influenced so many is a testament to its importance and effectiveness. It is then no surprise that these rights and liberties are regarded within the document as if they have existed since time immemorial. Indeed, the Magna Carta sets out principles that are timeless. They will always be fact and truth.

This is a quote from Winston Churchill here on Magna Carta. He says: "All this means that the people of any country have the right, and should have the power by constitutional action, by free unfettered elections, with secret ballot, to choose or change the character or form of government under which they dwell; that freedom of speech and thought should reign; that courts of justice, independent of the executive, unbiased by any party, should administer laws which have received the broad assent of large majorities ... Here are the title deeds of freedom which should lie in every cottage home. Here is the message of the British and American peoples to mankind."

"Here is a law which is above the King and which even he must not break. This reaffirmation of a supreme law and its expression in a general charter is the great work of Magna Carta; and this alone justifies the respect in which men have held it."

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. James J. Bradley: I want to first of all commend the member for bringing forward this legislation at a time

when we recognize that democracy is probably at its crossroads around the world. If we observe what is happening in various parts of the world where democracy was ruling and was accepted by most and we see it under continued threat by those who would not use democratic means to achieve their end. So I want to commend the member. I think it's very timely.

1610

I also want to use this as an opportunity to pay tribute to Julia Munro, the member for York-Simcoe, a very distinguished member of this Parliament. You should never vote for something based on who's introducing it, but if I ever had to make an exception to that, I would probably vote for something that Julia Munro would introduce in this Legislature.

I say to the members of the Progressive Conservative caucus, if you want to portray what a Progressive Conservative is about to the people of Ontario, look to the member for York-Simcoe. That's the image you want to present to the people of this province, as a Progressive Conservative. I've served through many Parliaments, and she has distinguished herself very nicely in this House. I've had that chance to observe her. She has certainly tackled the problems of the people of her constituency. She is a credit to, and she has a commitment to and a dedication to the people of her constituency and to the people of the province of Ontario.

She has—I just jotted down, "What could I say nicely about her?"—performed with moderation, civility, honesty and class, as a member of this Legislature. Her presence in this House will be truly missed at the conclusion of this parliamentary session.

The ink is still drying on this, Julia, as I said.

She has chosen to leave the Legislature and will do so with her integrity intact.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I will return to the member from York-Simcoe to wrap up.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I find that a very difficult task to do.

I've sat here and listened to all of the expressions of the various members who have spoken, and I started jotting down some of the keywords that they brought to their comments—things like how Magna Carta triggers action within a community, that it inspires, that it's a touchstone for today. Certainly, that was what I wanted to convey today when I made the comments on Magna Carta. I knew I had a set of Magna Carta notes in the drawer, but I wanted one that spoke to today's issue. I think that it's most important to see it as a touchstone, when you look at the perils of people today on innocence and due process and things like that.

The personal comments that people have made to me are obviously very, very heartwarming. At the same time, it's difficult for me because I have to hold it together, and this is not easy when you've made the decision that it's time to go after doing something that you've so thoroughly enjoyed. It's a journey that I've been extremely fortunate to have. The people you meet, the lives that you affect in a good way—it's amazing. The people who've come back and said, "My son got a job," "I was

able to do something I never thought I would be able to do”—these are real people who are our constituents. Listening to them is an education in itself, and it certainly provides you with enough to do for the next decade.

Anyway, I think I've run out of time.

I want to particularly thank the dean of the House—
Interjections.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Thank you.

Applause.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

TAXPAYER PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DES CONTRIBUABLES

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will deal first with ballot item number 1, standing in the name of Mr. Hillier.

Mr. Hillier has moved second reading of Bill 15, An Act to amend the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

I believe the nays have it.

We're going to vote on this item at the end of the voting.

PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LA PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS PERSONNELS

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Takhar has moved second reading of Bill 14, An Act with respect to the custody, use and disclosure of personal information.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear “carried.”

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to turn to the member in terms of which standing committee this bill will be referred to.

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: I would like to refer this bill to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Agreed? I hear “agreed.” Congratulations.

MAGNA CARTA DAY ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE JOUR DE LA GRANDE CHARTE

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mrs. Munro has moved second reading of Bill 4, An Act to proclaim Magna Carta Day.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear “carry.”

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to turn to the member to defer which committee this bill will go to.

Mrs. Julia Munro: General government.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Agreed? Agreed. Congratulations.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1616 to 1621.

TAXPAYER PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DES CONTRIBUABLES

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Hillier has moved second reading of Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Bailey, Robert
Coe, Lorne
Hillier, Randy

Jones, Sylvia
Martow, Gila
Oosterhoff, Sam

Walker, Bill

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura
Baker, Yvan
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Coteau, Michael
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Duguid, Brad

French, Jennifer K.
Hunter, Mitzi
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
McMahon, Eleanor

Milczyn, Peter Z.
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Sandals, Liz
Tabuns, Peter
Takhar, Harinder S.
Vanthof, John
Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 7; the nays are 26.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 22, 2018, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: After this brief interlude for private members' business, which, of course, is an incredibly important part of the legislative process, so that various members could bring forward issues that are of importance to them, their individual portfolios and ridings, it's always a pleasure to return back to the business at hand and the business of government.

In this case, I'm not completely sure that the government would really want to return to the business of governing, as it seems that the last 15 years have not been too kind to their party or to the province of Ontario.

I have the pleasure today, on behalf of the constituents of Niagara West—Glanbrook, of responding to the throne speech.

This morning, in my earlier remarks and comments, I had the chance to speak about some of the issues surrounding the speech from the throne. I spoke a little bit about my concern with the fact that it struck from the agenda, and struck from the table, some of these really excellent measures that were brought forward by private members—one of the reasons why the member for York—Simcoe had to reintroduce her bill this afternoon was because of the prorogation of the House—as well as, unfortunately, the piece of legislation that I brought forward, my first private member's bill, the Compassionate Care Act.

Quite frankly, as important as private members' business is, I think it's very important that we look at the actions of the government, not only our own particular legislation that we've deemed to be important to ourselves and our communities, but what the government has been doing for 15 years.

Quite honestly, the government legacy is one of debt, it's one of scandal, it's one of waste and mismanagement and it's one that, frankly, they don't seem to be too proud of. I think it's fair to say that when we heard the throne speech, you would have thought that the province was in a greater mess than what, after 15 years, they seem to have created.

Unfortunately, what we see not only across the province but in my particular area is a lack, on behalf of the government, of really good governance. As former Premier Bill Davis said, good governance is a very basic thing. It's not new, it's not exciting and it's not particularly sexy, but an important part of the duty that we perform here is simply that process of good governance.

I haven't had the chance to speak with former Premier Bill Davis, but I think it's fair to say that if we look at the examples of Liberal waste that they've brought forward over the past 15 years and the amount of neglect of taxpayers' dollars that they've demonstrated—whether it's \$8 billion on eHealth, as the Auditor General described in 2016, or \$1.1 billion for cancelling gas plants to try to save a couple of Liberal seats; whether it's a \$4.5-million salary for the CEO of Hydro One or \$2 billion on smart meters, as the Auditor General detailed in her 2014 report—it's clear that this government does not have an income problem; they don't have a revenue problem; they have a spending problem.

I think that's also one of the things we can see, as we're heading into an election: that this government is more than willing to throw around taxpayer dollars in significant ways without perhaps recognizing the cost and the sacrifice that people have had to make in order to pay those taxes. These are dollars that are precious resources that have been entrusted to this government by the citizens of Ontario. I think it's really unfortunate that as we look at this \$8 billion on eHealth and the \$1.1 billion on gas plants, there's no money for some other very important projects.

In my local constituency, what I want to talk about specifically is the new West Lincoln Memorial Hospital that is long overdue in the Niagara region. When I think of the various government promises that we saw heading into budget week next week from this throne speech, I have a little bit of skepticism. I'm not going to lie. I doubt perhaps the government's ability to actually follow through with some of these broad promises.

It's easy to talk about providing the sun, the moon and the stars, as it seems to me they're willing to do on the taxpayers' dime, but when we look at 15 years, what have they actually accomplished? I think this is a prime case, if you look at the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, of the sorts of broken promises that the Liberals have actually held.

What we saw with the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital was that, in 2004, shortly after forming this government, the Liberal government called the redevelopment of the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital a priority.

I want to back up and say that this hospital was built in 1948. We've had members in this Legislature stand up and speak about their local hospitals that were built in the 1960s and 1970s and that needed development and redevelopment. The fact that in 2004 the government called the redevelopment a priority and today, 14 years later, we haven't seen any real action on this is, quite frankly, disturbing and a sad statement on the worth of Liberal promises.

The government promised in 2005 that construction on the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital would begin by 2009. Then the Liberal government promised that shovels would be in the ground by 2011. The next promise was that redevelopment would begin in 2013. You just keep moving the yardstick.

When the first promise was made, in 2004, I was seven years old. I must say that I was born in that hospital myself, but at the time I was born, in 1997, people were already raising money and looking forward to the redevelopment of this hospital. It was something that we expected in the near future. Some 20 years later, I'm now fighting for the same hospital that my predecessor fought for for 22 years.

1630

After promising that construction would begin in 2009, and then 2011, and then 2013, the government's 2012 budget actually cancelled the project completely. Unfortunately, it seems that the only sure guarantee of a new hospital is a new government, and I think that's

something that constituents in my riding have recognized. We even saw it, unfortunately, in the by-election, where we saw politics that are being played with people's health. We had the Liberal candidate in that by-election say, "The only way you can get a new hospital is if you elect a Liberal." I think that spoke to a mentality that we've seen, where the Liberals are using targeted taxpayer dollars to campaign for re-election. They're trying to paper over the type of negligence and waste that we've seen over the past 15 years and hope that people will just kind of have it disappear, that they won't remember all of the broken promises.

It's actually remarkable. My predecessor, Tim Hudak, had over 8,000 people who showed up to a rally for this hospital at Grimsby Secondary School in my riding, but the Liberals just haven't paid any attention. I'm very, very disappointed with that, and I look forward to being part of a strong PC government that will actually take meaningful action on health care.

Going back to the throne speech: Although the throne speech discussed at length various new spending measures and attempts to gloss over the last 15 years—I'm not even going to get into the debt and deficit part of it. I think we can go on and expand about the fact that debt today is tomorrow's taxes, unfortunately. But one of the things is that they practically ignored the need for economic growth. The topic only really came up toward the end of the throne speech, and then it was primarily only discussed as a means to an end of supplying the government with the funds that they want.

They didn't have a lot to say in the throne speech about how the government is planning to encourage this growth. They didn't say much except for spending more money and supporting regional investments and job funds in struggling regions of the province, which is not in and of itself a bad thing. But I think the Liberals are good at talking about these broad, general, "We're going to do good things. We're going to fix it all. Don't worry, we've got everything figured out"—yet at the end of the day, the throne speech still had that air of desperation, that aura of not being sure what the best steps are to take.

So there does remain a clear and obvious need for policy reforms to help encourage sustainable economic growth. In my portfolio as associate critic for research, innovation and technology, I meet a lot of people who speak about—whether it's through our tax burden or unpredictability—a brain drain to the United States. They speak about a lack of access to capital here to grow their tech companies, a lack of access to talent, to a certain extent. I would say, to quite a large extent, a lot of the responsibility for this lack of access to talent and capital lies with this Liberal government.

This throne speech is a desperate attempt from a tired Liberal government to hit reset and try to mislead voters, perhaps, about the intent of—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member has to withdraw.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I withdraw.

But I'll see what other members in this House have to say about it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to offer my comments on the remarks from the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook. This is where we started the day in this chamber, with the member's remarks, so I have managed to have the opportunity to appreciate the full 20 minutes. I'll say that some of his comments resonated, I think, not just with me but also perhaps with the folks in Ontario—some of his questions about what the government was hoping to accomplish with this prorogation and the reset and the throne speech.

When he called them a tired and sad government, I thought, "That's an interesting way of putting it. I'm pretty sure I'm hearing that at the doorsteps in my community," because people recognize that this throne speech, as the member said, has an air of desperation and it feels kind of like a last-ditch attempt. One of the members of the Legislature had commented that in the throne speech, there were 73 places where they used the word "care." I thought, well, I wonder if we can pull from Hansard the number of times that we've actually seen them care, but I don't think there are 73 in the last 15 years. But then, I wasn't here for all 15 of those.

Earlier this morning, the member talked about his private member's bill that fell off the order paper. I also lost the opportunity to debate my upcoming private member's bill. They've reshuffled the order, so I won't have that opportunity. I'm disappointed, of course, for myself, but also for the people of Oshawa that I represent; I wanted to bring their voices to this Legislature. The government says, "No, we'd like to hear our own voices," which again is disappointing.

His questions about how the government will encourage growth—I don't have that answer. I certainly don't see it from the government. I do see the resilience of our communities, and I'm hopeful for a change for the better.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. James J. Bradley: I just have a history lesson, because my good friend from Niagara West—Glanbrook would not have been alive, I think, at the time that it was on the hit list: The West Lincoln Memorial Hospital was on the hit list. They had the hospital restructuring commission that the Harris government had set up—we called it the "hospital closing commission"—where they closed some 28 hospitals in the province of Ontario. One of the targets, I tell my friend, was the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital.

Thank goodness Debbie Zimmerman led the charge to prevent that from happening. She had all these people out. My good friend Tim Hudak was there. A lot of people got together and prevented the Harris government from closing it at that time. Of course, being in opposition, they had the strong support of the opposition at the time, as we usually do in these situations.

The other contention is that, somehow, favouritism is given to government ridings in terms of hospitals. May I tell you this? We hadn't won Cambridge since I could

ever remember, nor had we won Burlington since I was in this House, and yet, two of the hospitals that received funding for the purpose of refurbishment or additions were in fact in Cambridge and Burlington, neither of which ridings we would have had a chance to win, normally, you would think. When I was Minister of Transportation, I signed more letters to municipalities in Tory ridings than I ever did in Liberal ridings at that point in time. So that is really not a contention that is valid.

I did see that the company Stihl has looked at the latest Forum poll and now has its chainsaws on sale. So you can get, for \$259.95, the MS 170 gas chainsaw.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to commend the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook on his comments.

But being that the minister brought up hospitals—I came here not because of a lone hospital. I like to think it was partly my good looks and some other attributes I had as well.

Now, it might have been a coincidence, but we'd been fighting back in Sarnia—Lambton for a new hospital for a long time, and fundraising. It might have been just a coincidence, but the groundbreaking ceremony was scheduled for Friday, October 13. The election was Wednesday, October 11. It might have been a coincidence; I don't know.

Interjection.

Mr. Robert Bailey: No, it might have been a coincidence. But I was there to turn the sod. I think there were other plans in place, but sometimes the best-laid plans of mice and men in government go awry, as we know. I was able to be there, along with the former member, and turned the sod.

Sometimes I think that some of these things are arranged, because I certainly didn't know about it before election day. I got this invitation the next day to be there, and I was certainly there.

I also remember about hospital closures. We had a hospital in Petrolia at the time, the CEE hospital. We were able, with a lot of support from the local community—a former member at that time, the late Lorne Henderson, and, of course, Marcel Beaubien, the local member at that time, were able to rally, and that hospital is still there today. It has a vote of confidence by the government here. It put money towards it, and we're going to expand that facility. There are going to be some groundbreaking things taking place there. It has had a member of the opposition for the last 11 years, so I think it all depends on the situation and the hospital and the people who work on those situations.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

1640

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to speak here in the House, and today to respond to the comments from the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook, and also the comments from the member

from Sarnia—Lambton, who gave a history of why he ended up in this House.

How I ended up in provincial politics was when the Mike Harris government tried to shove garbage down the throats of northern Ontarians. He was going to take a bulldozer to the rules, and he was going to shove garbage into the Adams mine regardless of whether it was safe or not. That's how I got here, and that's why I will continue to fight against that type of language and that type of attitude.

But getting back to the throne speech, on behalf of Ontarians, you have to wonder what the throne speech was really for. It gave some work to the trumpeters—the trumpets were great—but the idea of a throne speech is to set the course of a government. After the election, you set the course of the government and tell what your plans are. This didn't set the course of the government; it was a reset to try to change the channel. They replaced “openness and transparency” with “care and”—complacency? No, care and something else. But it was more of a marketing exercise. All they were trying to do was to change the channel in a media cycle. They spent all this time and money, and they're just trying to flip the media cycle for a day or a week.

That shows how tired and cynical this government has become, and that shows that truly this province does need, in the words of my colleague, change for the better.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook to wrap up.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's always a pleasure to hear from my fellow colleagues in the House. I want to thank the members for Oshawa, St. Catharines, Sarnia—Lambton and Timiskaming—Cochrane for their contributions and responses to my speech on the throne speech this afternoon.

There were two really good headlines that I read when I was doing some research on the response to the throne speech, one from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and one from the Fraser Institute. The first one says, “Ontario Throne Speech Another Set of Empty Promises.” No matter where you sit on the political spectrum, I think it's fair to say that it is indeed another set of empty promises. It's attempting to make up for 15 years of bad governance, and I think Ontarians have seen through that façade and will hopefully also make that known when they mark their X on June 7.

However, the other one is “Ontario's Throne Speech Ignores Growth And Competitiveness.” It cites a study that saw that “between 2007 and 2016, Ontario's private sector created fewer jobs, on average, each year than all but two provinces,” New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. So Ontario was beneath the national average and near the bottom of the pack on three other indicators of economic progress, on all other counts as well. I think this is a pretty scathing indictment of the government's policies over the past 15 years. Having a decade of lost growth is really a tragedy for the prosperity and economic opportunity of our province.

I got involved in politics, as well, because I believe it's important for young people to be able to get ahead. I

believe it's important for young people to be able to graduate and find good jobs, to pursue educations that lead to meaningful careers. Unfortunately, under this Liberal government, there are a lot of young people—I think of my peers who are coming out of university—who are looking at precarious employment. It's difficult to buy a house, it's difficult to get into a career, and I would say that that's the legacy of the last 15 years. This throne speech won't change that.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate this opportunity, Speaker. I've been through three general elections now, and one by-election, and I have to tell you that after a while, you start to pick up on the signs that an election is on its way. It's sort of like watching the first birds arrive early in the spring, so you know that summer's coming.

Interjection: The robins.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes.

Having watched the Liberal government through those three general elections, you can tell that their polling is problematic and that an election is coming soon when they start changing their position on a variety of very important issues.

The change in the minimum wage: I remember hearing the Premier dismiss the idea of going to \$14 or \$15 about a year ago—no interest whatsoever. But then her polling numbers collapsed, and things moved.

The announcement that more money will be going into hospitals: After they've been starved for the last decade or 15 years, after the crisis of hallway medicine has become more and more apparent, finally this government has realized that this could be a problem. It wasn't a problem that people were stuck on gurneys in shower stalls or in auditoriums. The problem was that the polling was killing them and they had to move on that.

Talking about dental: We haven't seen the grand dental plans, and I look forward to seeing whatever the Liberals bring forward, because I have an interest in marketing, and I'm curious as to how they'll present their position—not that I expect them to actually deliver the goods, but I'm interested in the marketing. So talking dental—there must be an election coming.

Talking about a francophone university, which is something that the francophone community in this province has been talking about for a long time—there must be an election coming because they're promising to put money into a francophone university.

All of those things, Speaker, are a very clear indicator that (a) an election is coming, and (b) that the Liberals' polling is not very jolly, one might say; that somewhere in a backroom David Herle from Gandalf is saying to people, "You're going to have a really grim career change very soon if you don't do something." So one sees these fascinating shifts and zigs and zags in policy. All of those things I've said are really good indicators. But really, an extraordinary indicator is the use of this chamber and this Legislature as a backdrop for pre-election announcements. That's what the speech from the

throne was all about—nothing more, nothing less. "How do we grab the news cycle for a day?"

I think it was my colleague from Timiskaming who was talking about the employment of the trumpeters with the gold helmets and the great crests. I mean, how often do you get to bring those people out? Clearly, not often enough. So you are, for sure, going to get a good television hit, if nothing else, with the guys with the trumpets and the gold helmets.

The government of this province saw an opportunity for a good media hit, a good news cycle, and they took it.

Typically, you get a speech from the throne after an election, when a government is presenting its program, when it has gone through a long, bruising experience—all governments go through bruising experiences in elections; all parties go through bruising experiences. It's the nature of them. But then everyone calms down, and you have the speech from the throne, and they set out their priorities: What from their platform are they actually going to execute? In some cases, midway through the term—and I think it was 2016 when we had a speech from the throne—you have a speech from the throne, to say, "In the last half of this term, this is where we're going." But less than 90 days before an election? Seriously, that's nothing more than a fairly well-crafted marketing ploy.

Speaker, let's look at the speech. I have to say that the Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, is a person who commands respect. She is a very accomplished woman. I'm very glad that she's the Lieutenant Governor. I think everyone in this province who has met her respects her. So my comments are about the speech and have nothing to do with the Lieutenant Governor. She was doing her job and she executed it well.

But I do want to talk about the text of the speech, which I have before me. I'll just go through a few things because it's noteworthy; it's worth looking at.

On the first page: "Indigenous peoples have suffered under the harsh legacy of colonialism"—no argument. "We honour the role indigenous peoples will continue to play as we push ahead to build and rebuild those partnerships here in Ontario." Well, as the NDP's environment and climate change critic, I got to ask the Premier and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change about the mercury poisoning of the communities at Grassy Narrows, at that site near the paper mill in northern Ontario, and time after time after time what I got was deflection and diversion. If it wasn't for the people of Grassy Narrows and some really excellent reporting by the Toronto Star, where they went out and they took soil samples and they detected buried barrels, we'd still be under the impression from this government that this is a problem that is going to solve itself over time. Well, no, that's not true. It isn't going to solve itself over time.

1650

We had the Premier and her minister stalling month after month after month while people continued to be subjected to mercury poisoning. What kind of reconcilia-

tion is that? What kind of reconciliation is it when an obvious instance of poisoning is not addressed forthrightly and honestly?

Not only that, but the people of Grassy Narrows asked for what they called a “mercury home,” a care facility in their community. The people who had been poisoned, who had lost motor control of their hands and feet, who were suffering neurological damage, asked for a care home in their community so that people wouldn’t have to go 100 kilometres away to a care facility where they were isolated from family and friends and, as some of them said to me, die alone. How were they greeted? They were given no promise. They were given no commitment, when a community went through decades of being poisoned.

When you talk about “build and rebuild those partnerships here in Ontario” with First Nations and you ignore people who are poisoned, then you are not credible on this issue. You are not credible on this issue.

The government, on the next page, talks about the “impulse to care for each other, alive in our communities every day.” Frankly, Speaker, I won’t argue with that because I can say, whether it’s in Whitby, Scarborough, Oshawa, Peterborough, Etobicoke, Markham, Brampton or Ajax, all over this province, that I am constantly amazed at people’s willingness to extend themselves and actually help their neighbours. They don’t have to be close family, but there’s a very profound, basic decency in the people of this province that I always marvel at and, frankly, I think is something to cherish. It’s a wonderful thing. That statement is correct. I don’t argue with that statement. In fact, I’m very glad I live in a province where I see that—actually, I’ll digress.

I had some relatives come from Latvia a few years ago. They were in downtown Toronto—they had never been in North America—and they got lost. The thing that astounded them, with very limited English, is how people would come up to them and say, “You look lost. Where do you need to get to?” They would direct them. They just said, “We’ve not experienced that back at home. It’s amazing to us to experience it here.” It made me feel very good about this province. That part I think is a fair claim.

The speech goes on to talk about the response to unprecedented flooding in Brantford, Ottawa and southwestern Ontario. Speaker, you can’t attribute any one extreme weather event to climate change, but we’re in a situation where, as the world gets hotter and the world’s weather changes, we will see more and more catastrophic flooding. Yet this government has had a very poor record in acting on climate, far below what’s necessary to actually protect this population and contribute fairly to the globally necessary effort to take this on.

I was around in 2008 for the debate on the cap-and-trade bill then. I listened to the Premier—Dalton McGuinty at the time—talk about climate change being the most pressing issue facing humanity. We passed the bill and it died, consigned to a back room somewhere, probably recycled. Nothing happened.

For the most pressing issue facing humanity, to go through the process of introducing a bill, having public hearings, debating it and then simply setting it aside, it doesn’t speak to a level of commitment commensurate with the scale of the risk and the threat.

We’ve come back to it. I think it was in 2016, if my memory serves me correctly, that we had the next debate on cap-and-trade. I’m glad that we did, because we do have to take action. But Speaker, the way things have been set up in Ontario, even going by the government’s own consultants, we won’t come close to meeting the climate protection targets that were set—not even close. That is scandalous, because if you say that something is really important—if you see the example of people being flooded out of their homes or having their homes destroyed by tornadoes and you still don’t act or you act inadequately, then you can’t claim the moral high ground. You simply cannot.

We met our climate targets in 2014-15 because we had a recession. Shutting down coal plants was a good thing to do. All three parties were committed to that. It helped. But it was the recession and the restructuring of the economy in this province that allowed us to meet our targets, not programs that were put in place. We still don’t have the programs in place that would actually allow us to meet our climate targets. They’re not there.

When you look at the documents put out by the government, the expectation is that the buying of carbon allowances from California will demonstrate that we’ve met the target. In medieval Europe, people were able to buy indulgences for their sins. It didn’t mean they stopped sinning, but it meant they had to pay. Buying a carbon allowance, part of a larger system, can be very useful. It should be in place. But it’s not a substitute for actually reducing emissions. This government has gone on to hope that those purchases of indulgences will give it the moral authority for saying that it has done something about climate when in fact it has fallen far, far short of what has to happen.

Speaker, that part of the speech was disturbing to me.

I want to also talk about the problem cited in this bill: that for many of our friends and neighbours, life is getting harder. Speaker, I don’t know if you were here in 2007. You may have been; I can’t remember. But I was elected in a by-election in March of 2006. In the fall of 2006, my colleague Cheri DiNovo started a campaign for a \$10-an-hour minimum wage. Minimum wage was seven bucks at the time.

I remember Cheri DiNovo asking questions of the Premier, asking questions of the Minister of Labour, asking questions of this government about when they were going to move on that issue. What was it going to take? And she was dismissed. She was told that she was completely out to lunch, that “We aren’t going to go to 10 bucks an hour; the economy of Ontario will collapse; don’t even think about it.” But happily, and this is why I love democracy—man, if it wasn’t for elections, nothing would ever happen in any society. But elections happen, and in February of 2006, there was a by-election in York

South-Weston. We had a very good candidate, Paul Ferreira, and I went out and I campaigned for Paul. My guess is that a number of people who are in this House now were out on that campaign. To all those veterans who survived and who weren't left in a snowbank, it was pretty cold.

But I'll tell you what was hot: going—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You were? Left in a snowbank, or you were out canvassing?

When we went to the door and said to people, "We're fighting for a \$10-an-hour minimum wage," it moved things tremendously. We won that by-election. I have to say to you, Speaker, that within a month of that win, the Liberal government was coming forward with a \$10-an-hour minimum wage because an election was coming that fall and they had seen the political power of actually taking action to improve people's lives.

Now we're in 2018. In 2016, the NDP came out and said, "Fifteen bucks an hour minimum wage." Mike Crawley from the CBC wrote a really good story in about January or February of 2017, where he'd interviewed Premier Wynne and asked her, "What about this \$15-an-hour minimum wage?" "No, no," she says, "we don't need that. What we've got is a solid plan. We're going to continue on that plan. We'll be good. Everything is fine." Until, of course, the fall of 2017, when the polling numbers came in and they showed this black abyss opening up underneath the Premier. Suddenly, "Hey, a \$15-an-hour minimum wage? That sounds pretty good to me," says Premier Wynne.

1700

When a government is in peril, and this one is, sometimes good things happen. This is a good thing, going to a \$15-an-hour minimum wage. I'm glad that we came out and fought for it. I'm glad that we established the political context where it became necessary for the government to move on that issue.

So when the government in its speech from the throne says, "For many of our friends and neighbours, life is getting harder," they're right. That's because this government has neglected to take the steps necessary to make life easier, and has only taken steps when it has been forced, when its back is to the wall.

In the speech there is a comment that: "Part-time and precarious work is becoming more common..."

"And as these pressures mount, they bear down on families where it matters most."

No kidding.

Part-time, precarious work: You talk to people who are teaching in community colleges and universities. We had a strike last fall, and we've got a strike going on at York University right now. My partner is taking a course at George Brown. When she started that course last fall, one of her instructors had been hired that day to teach the course. She hadn't known about it because, as a part-time, sessional person, they're only told at the last minute. So this instructor desperately was trying to get things in place so that she could teach the course.

This isn't some amorphous, strange thing out there that the government has nothing to do with. It is funding colleges and universities in a way that is driving part-time, precarious work. It has got no policies against that. So we see the strikes at community colleges; we see the strikes at universities. When you squeeze people hard enough, they fight back.

Although I will say this: I got an email this week from one of my constituents. He is a part-time instructor. In fact, he and his wife are both people with masters' who are teaching part time in the community college system. He, in this case, had his hours cut back; and she, who was making less than him before, is now making about the same as him. But both of them just feel a complete sense of desperation. They cannot hold it all together.

So when you talk about compassion for those who are dealing with part-time, precarious work, and you're the one who's making sure that that's the way the system operates, you don't have any credibility. Yes, there's a problem. The government created it. We're going to talk about it, but are you actually going to change your policies and change your budgets so that people who teach, who give the skills to the next generation, are going to be able to themselves live decent, stable lives and be able to invest in course development in a way that we need to have happen?

Speaker, there's a lot in that speech from the throne that deserves a very critical eye. My time is running short. I'll say that it's useful to know what's going to be in Liberal campaign flyers in the next few months; it gives me an opportunity to prepare for debates.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Hon. Harinder Malhi: As my colleague referred to, life is getting harder, and because life is getting harder, it makes it all the more important that we continue to build on the good work we're doing. Our government has been committed to supporting Ontarians for the last three and a half years, and this throne speech builds on that work. It talks about OHIP+. It talks about free tuition. It's going to be able to help make life easier for people and their families, for individuals across the province.

The throne speech has been focused on building a better health care system. Health care is important to all of us. It's important to our families; it's important to help take care of our loved ones. It's important to show how much we care.

That is exactly why we have made these firm investments in health care. We have built a system that's doing an incredible job of taking care of people, and we have increased our investments into that system.

Then we moved on to help make life easier by providing free pharmacare for children under the age of 25. Just yesterday, we were able to announce that we're going to be moving forward on assisting seniors with their pharmacare needs.

We understand how hard life has gotten. When you talk about minimum wage, this is why we have now made minimum wage \$14 an hour. Coming from the

status of women, we know that a majority of our minimum wage earners are women. It's so important to help those who are in vulnerable positions. We want to help them be able to put food on the table, be able to support their families and their children. That means healthier families, stronger families and a stronger economy for everybody. We know, at the end of the day, how important it is for people to ensure that their families are well taken care of. That's why it was important for us to take this step. The time was now. We needed to be able to support those women now and to support our communities now.

I think that the throne speech has taken the opportunity to build on the hard work that we're doing—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm just going to quote the minister who just spoke. She said, "We understand how hard life has gotten." Well, you've been the government for almost 15 years. Madam Speaker, whose fault is it if life has gotten harder? I would ask the minister to maybe contemplate that and explain that.

She also said that "a better health care system" is what the throne speech was about. Again, it has been almost 15 years. I tabled a private member's bill explaining how many of our heavily-government-subsidized—over half a million dollars throughout their career—graduates of our medical school systems here in Ontario are not able to practise medicine. Whose fault is that, Madam Speaker? It has been in front-page newspaper articles after Dr. Robert Chu committed suicide last year.

We're here discussing the government's throne speech. It's the chance now for the opposition to evaluate and to comment on the throne speech which just took place after the government prorogued for basically a day. We are here and having to reset. This is called, basically, item number one, because we had to reset. All of the work that was being done in committees, anything that hadn't been passed, basically goes in the garbage and we start all over again.

We just had a private member's bill. I believe it was the third time since I was elected only four years ago that we were debating a Magna Carta Day in June. It's unfortunate when we have to cancel some of the projects that we are working on because an election is looming. We all understand that and we all prepare for that. But to prorogue to have a throne speech to tell us that life has gotten harder under this government—I wish it was laughable, but it's unfortunate.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the comments from the member for Toronto—Danforth.

It doesn't surprise anyone watching at home that what the speech from the throne really was, as we've heard, was sort of a reset. But it really was in response, I suspect, as he mentioned, to their polling numbers. It's in response to the fact that people are really disappointed

and people are very unhappy. It isn't just that life is hard; it's that there isn't a clear path forward for so many folks in Ontario right now, and things have to get better.

To hear the member from Toronto—Danforth remind us about the actual day itself—we heard about the trumpets and the pomp and circumstance—I thought, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if, instead of just circumstance, we could actually have some substance?"

Interjections.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Yes. I watched it back on TV and I thought, "That looked so cool. What a beautiful day. What a neat place I work in."

Then I thought, "Wouldn't it be tremendous if the government was motivated or driven by principles instead of by polling numbers? Wouldn't it be remarkable if all of these last-ditch efforts and these promises in the throne speech and what we'll see, undoubtedly, in the Hail Mary budget that they'll bring in"—we're seeing all of the needs that we've been hearing about for the last 15 years reflected: "Oh, here are the solutions. Here are all of these things."

1710

They've known all along what is needed in the province, so why on earth didn't they get to it before now? To hear about the impulse to care for people being alive and well in our communities—thank goodness that people care in our communities and that our partner organizations do the heavy lifting when it comes to addictions, community living, youth services and mental health, because this government is doing nothing. Lord knows, cutting all of our ministries going forward is not the answer either.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Hon. David Zimmer: I do want to speak to the issue of the throne speech debate. I particularly want to address health care issues, and I particularly want to address what we're doing with respect to hospitals to improve health care delivery at the hospital level.

I can tell you that this morning I was at the North York General Hospital, which is in the Willowdale/Don Valley West area. It is the hospital that services North York. North York General Hospital has always been known in the community as one of the jewels in the crown of Ontario's health care system.

This morning, I was there with the Premier, with Minister Charles Sousa and with the Minister of Health, Helena Jaczek.

Hon. Jeff Leal: You didn't bring me, though.

Hon. David Zimmer: Unfortunately, the Minister of Agriculture could not join us, but he was, of course, welcome, because he has an interest in healthy food being served at hospitals from an Ontario menu. But I digress.

At that meeting this morning, there were, I would estimate, about 200 professional health care workers: hospital CEOs, nurses, people working in the laundromat, in reception, volunteers, everybody. The Premier announced the \$822-million commitment to hospitals, I

think it was, and pointed out that the North York General Hospital's share of that 800-and-something million dollars would be about \$10 million plus. You could see the warmth and the happiness with which that announcement was greeted.

We are serious about maintaining and improving and continuing on into future years the high quality of the hospitals here in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Toronto—Danforth to wrap up.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity.

I want to thank the Minister of the Status of Women, the member from Thornhill, the member from Oshawa and the Minister of Indigenous Relations for their comments.

For this government to talk about the great job it has done on health care—it boggles my little mind. When you're in a situation where you've got hospitals way over capacity on an ongoing basis, and you talk about the wonderful job you're doing—Speaker, I'm taken aback. Clearly, there is a level of nerve here that is astounding to observe.

I'm interested that the Minister of Indigenous Relations said nothing about Grassy Narrows and about the health care needed in that community. He could have addressed that matter. But why would he, Speaker? He didn't address it when it came up earlier; he didn't address it when I brought it up today, because there is nothing good to say. Those people in that community have been abandoned. I don't think that's morally defensible, but that's the position of the government.

When it comes to the actual hospital care, putting funds back in that you've stripped out over a decade—and in fact not putting in funds to deal with the problems that you've created, to correct the backlog—may sound good in an announcement, and for very desperate front-line workers who are looking for any sign of relief, the idea that you're going to be putting more money in has got to sound good. If I were them, it would sound good to me. But it falls short of what is needed to actually deal with the problems we have or to deal with the damage that has been done. It's indefensible.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? I recognize the member from Ajax—Pickering.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you, Speaker.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Who are you sharing your time with?

Mr. Joe Dickson: It's a pleasure to stand and speak on the throne speech—

Hon. Jeff Leal: You're sharing your time with me.

Mr. Joe Dickson: —and I'm sharing my time today with the Minister of Agriculture, from Peterborough, and—

Interjections.

Mr. Joe Dickson: You will have to keep them under control, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order.

Mr. Joe Dickson: It's ironical. I just got notification from one of my staff—they were preparing an announce-

ment to send out. I will obliterate the amount of the contribution, but it says—today's announcement, and actually saying that tomorrow: "I am thrilled with this week's announcement of ... in additional funding to Lakeridge Health. This funding will ensure that my Ajax and Pickering constituents receive the right care, at the right time, in the right place."

It goes on to mention that it will include better access to services, it will include shorter wait times, and it will be reducing capacity for patients' comfort and faster service.

I don't have the split, and I'm very hopeful that a portion of it is Ajax—Pickering—I understand it will be—and of course for my colleagues from Whitby and Oshawa and Port Perry and every other hospital in Durham. I still remember Whitby as the Dr. J.O. Ruddy hospital, where a good doctor came and looked after the 10 Dickson children. Thank God for my parents.

I'm just going to touch on a few items, if I could, and that is, when we get to an age of 65 or over—it's so appropriate that what has come forward in legislation is helping those who need the help the most. It's important to all three parties, I'm sure, who have members, have friends and have family who are 65 and over, and so much of this is just so important to every one of those people. It's ironical because, being the oldest of 10 children, of the 10 brothers and sisters, I can tell you that some of them are now getting to the point where they're 65 and over and they could certainly use that assistance.

We know the costs of health can cause anxiety and stress, especially for people 65 and over. We are often required to take multiple medications. That's normal, because the older you get, the more you need. We all want the best care for our parents and grandparents, which is why we are expanding OHIP+ to make prescription drugs free for people 65 and over.

When my parents didn't have that coverage, with the 10 children, we all chipped in to make sure that our parents were taken care of, loved and appropriately visited on an ongoing basis as they became residents of long-term-care facilities.

Beginning in August 2019, we will have more than 4,400 prescription drugs that will be available free of charge to everyone 65 and over. That is, as we all know, a growing number and assisting our population all the more. Yes, there will be no copayment and no deductible.

It's ironical: Every second Sunday now, when I come out of St. Bernadette's church after mass, I have one or two ladies confront me and say, "There is a charge when you get your medical card back and get it renewed once a year." As a matter of fact, they were very specific; they tell me in the month of August. I mentioned it to the Premier today in caucus and she said, "You know, Joe, that's already approved, that's already under way and that's being eliminated." That officially becomes eliminated in 2019. And I look forward to speaking to—I might go to mass twice on Sunday so I can tell them twice.

This expansion will make life more affordable for 2.6 million seniors and their families. That's a lot of people in Ontario. It will result in prescription drugs being there

for nearly one in every two Ontarians. This makes us much closer to the goal of pharmacare for the people of Ontario.

I'm just, right off the top of my head, trying to jot down a couple of things that are happening with us in long-term care and additional health services. As I go up the street, there's a brand new clinic open in the Central East LHIN. That's a major facility and very convenient for seniors. There are so many growth areas in health care being provided when you get to Durham region.

1720

I recall a gentleman, a very active Christian gentleman by the name of John Overzed. He was very active in the Glen Hill Terrace project, which is Whitby. I know both the parliamentary assistant to health and long-term care, John Fraser, and I were there. That's getting close to completion. That's just off Highway 12 as you come through Whitby.

In Ajax, we're just so busy. There has been a process going on for a long-term-care home called Balleycliffe lodge. It is with the Chartwell group. It's right across the road from my constituency office. One of the little things they are changing dramatically in health care for seniors: Instead of one large kitchen, there will be three small kitchens that will only serve 32 residents at a time.

The new facility, which will start to be torn down momentarily, is being increased from 90 beds to 192 beds, and that's on Station Street. Quite frankly, it makes sense. If you're trying to serve that many people at once, how are you going to get all the food out hot, fresh etc.? With smaller kitchens, they get faster service, hot food, more nutrition and less stumbling. It's just a much more convenient, warm, friendly place to be.

Another group was in, talking to us this past week, from Orchard Villa in Pickering. They're on Valley Farm Road. They want to move from 169 to 224 new facility units in their new complex. I understand that application is in and it should be coming forward.

Also, when I think of Whitby, as well, I remember the—the member would certainly remember the terrible fire, but it was all rebuilt. It's beautiful; it's new. When I was as young as 10 years old, there was a little shack there, and I used to visit one of my grandmothers and I used to visit one of my great-aunts. That appealed my mother, who couldn't go all the time as she was caring for 10 children.

I want to just mention that we've always been very clear that support for long-term care is important. That's why we continue to make critical investments. In the long-term-care homes, that has increased by \$348 million since 2013. Our investment in long-term-care homes increased by \$80 million this year alone, representing an increase of some 2%.

I think I'm getting close, Mr. Minister—maybe another minute.

We've announced we will be opening 5,000 new long-term-care beds over four years. This is part of our 10-year plan to create more than 30,000 new beds over the next decade working with the long-term-care sector.

Despite these achievements, we recognize the new challenges, especially Ontario's aging population, are putting additional pressure on existing facilities. We're creating so many new additions. You can see the improvement coming on an ongoing basis.

We lost our mental health unit to another hospital area, and that was Rouge Valley. After several years, when a number of us got involved, it came back to Lakeridge, particularly Ajax-Pickering, where it was 10 years ago. We have the operational funding of \$4.6 million through; we have new beds coming through.

I can go on all the way, but I would sooner just sit down and listen to another talented—or perhaps the most talented speaker we will have the opportunity of still hearing today, the last speaker of the day, the Minister of Agriculture from Peterborough.

Thank you, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the Minister of Agriculture, Food and small business.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I know it's a little late in the day. It's 5:25. I know the good folks in Peterborough riding are just tuning in now on Cogeco 95. They're just getting ready for their wonderful dinner of Ontario-grown food. But before they start the main course, I know they're having their wonderful salad. They're just going to tune in right now.

I'm really pleased to have the opportunity to say a few words about the throne speech this afternoon.

It was interesting to hear my good friend from Toronto–Danforth talk about climate change. Now, his position is interesting, because just recently, the vice-president of the United States, one Al Gore, was here in Toronto. He has looked at all the numbers, he has looked at all the statistics, and he said that the province of Ontario is one of the leaders in climate change.

If the member from Toronto–Danforth wants to get into a debate, I recommend that he give Vice-President Gore a call. We'll bring him back to Toronto, and the member from Toronto–Danforth and Vice-President Gore could have a little chat. He was quite clear, when he was here in Toronto, about what a great job and what an innovative program our cap-and-trade with California and Quebec is, in terms of combatting climate change. Well, we'll let the vice president have the last word on that.

Madam Speaker, I had 18 years in municipal politics in Peterborough—from 1985 until the fall of 2003. For 10 of those years, I sat on a hospital board in Peterborough, the St. Joseph's Hospital board, and for five of those years, I chaired the finance committee. So I have a great relationship with the medical profession in the riding of Peterborough.

The chief executive officer of the Peterborough Regional Health Centre, one Dr. Peter McLaughlin—who is one of the leading cardiac surgeons in the province of Ontario—tells me that part of the challenge this year was the flu season. He said quite clearly to me that if everybody in Ontario had gotten their flu shot—we give

it free, whether you go to a pharmacist, a nurse practitioner, a general practitioner, your family doctor or your next-door neighbour the surgeon. Everybody should get a flu shot in the province of Ontario, because Dr. McLaughlin told me that is the best preventive measure to keep people out of the ER in hospitals in Ontario. Madam Speaker, I just wanted to emphasize that.

The other thing I knew and that I went through—when I was a municipal councillor, I had the wonderful experience of going through the NDP government from 1990 to 1995 and then the wonderful experience of the eight years of Mr. Harris and Mr. Eves.

Let me tell you about that. They had a very innovative committee called the Who Does What committee. The Who Does What committee, of course, travelled around the province of Ontario. All of us who were in municipal politics caught on to that gig pretty early. It became the “who got done in” committee.

Madam Speaker, you could answer that question: Who got done in? Municipalities of the province.

Let me tell you about the game that they played. I got this information from their budget documents. Oh, Madam Speaker, they were clever, very clever indeed. They took the budget documents from the NDP government from 1990 to 1995. Of course, the NDP government had to grapple with a large budgetary deficit, but where did that deficit come from? It came because there was a significant downturn in the economy between 1990 and 1995, and welfare costs ballooned in the province of Ontario. So you look at their budget lines—it’s all in the library, Madam Speaker. Take a look at it. The numbers are there. So it went up; they had a deficit because of the social services costs of the province of Ontario.

But Mike Harris—oh, he was clever indeed. He said, “I’m going to try to control deficits in Ontario, because I’ll take those costs that always balloon in a downturn.” And who did he give them to? He gave them to municipalities in the province of Ontario. It was a neat move.

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I remember being at AMO in Ottawa. I’m in the room. The Premier was there. I’ve always been very respectful of any Premier of the province of Ontario. The assembled folks there gave him three standing ovations. So I’m at the back of the room, standing with my then chief administrative officer of the city of Peterborough, Brian Horton. He’s since retired. He’s a great guy; I know the family well. I said to Brian, “Brian, my south-end Peterborough elementary math tells me that this is not going to be revenue-neutral.” Brian Horton, who is a CA and a very qualified individual, turned to me and said, “Jeff, you’re exactly right. We know where the cost drivers are in the municipality. This is just going to be an offload, a download, so that municipalities will have to worry about any of those costs going forward.”

Let me tell you another story, about the 407. It’s the one I really like. Again, this is from their budget documents. I got all the stuff from the library. They were getting ready for the 1999 provincial election. They were short. Harris promised a balanced budget, and they got a

plug number in their budget of about \$3 billion. Madam Speaker, you’ve been to Walmart; you know the Walmart man. He starts with the price high and keeps lowering and lowering and lowering. There was a price put on the 407, and like Walmart—it started at \$9 billion: “No, we roll it back to \$8 billion.” “No, we roll it back to \$7 billion.” “No, we roll it back to \$6 billion.” “No, we roll it back to \$5 billion.” “No, we roll it back to \$4 billion.” Because they only needed \$3 billion, they sold off an asset at \$3 billion that was worth \$9 billion. So anybody who drives on the 407 can see that today—those gouging tolls on that section from Brock Road in Pickering through to Burlington. But the other section where the tolls are 30% less is a section that we have built from Brock Road in Pickering through Taunton Road/418 in Clarington. It’s interesting; that party there, when they were in power, promised the extension of the 407. They didn’t pay for one inch of the 407 beyond Brock Road in Pickering. The municipal leadership in Durham was asking for it for years. So this government delivered on that.

Madam Speaker, let me tell you about health care in the riding of Peterborough. We’ve built a brand new, state-of-the-art hospital in Peterborough under this government’s watch. We’re now building a modern 10-bed hospice under this government’s watch. I had the opportunity just recently, with the former Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Eric Hoskins, to announce a brand new, 125-bed long-term-care home in the beautiful community of Havelock, Ontario, in the wonderful municipality of Havelock-Belmont-Methuen.

My background is in economics. When you look at the BMO review that was done by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the economic fundamentals have been the best in this province in two decades. The unemployment rate, 5.5%, is the lowest it has been in 17 years. In my hometown of Peterborough, the unemployment rate is 4.9%, well below the provincial average.

Folks, they want to attack those statistics, and they may want to attack those underlying things.

My daughter, Shanae, who I’m going to pick up tomorrow, is at Laurier University in Waterloo. I’ve been in Waterloo on numerous occasions. I talk to business leaders in Waterloo, and they tell me the economy is booming. In fact, when you’re in Kitchener, Waterloo, Guelph, Cambridge—the unemployment rate is now what most economists would call a full employment rate, 4% or less.

Just this week, Randy Hope, the mayor of Chatham-Kent, who sat on those benches right over there, said things are booming in Chatham-Kent—a very distinguished former member of the NDP government, from 1990 to 1995.

What’s really interesting here is, I look over there and I see doom and I see gloom, but by every stretch of the imagination—any objective economist who has looked at the fundamentals of Ontario—things are in solid shape. Is there more to do? There’s always more to do. The throne speech outlined some of this.

We talk about deficits. Mr. Davis, who was a very distinguished Premier of the province of Ontario, I believe ran 14 straight deficits when he was Premier of the province of Ontario—and his very famous treasurer, a remarkable man, W. Darcy McKeough, was nicknamed the Duke of Kent because he represented the wonderful riding of Chatham–Kent. When you look at Steve Paikin's book written about Mr. Davis during his time as Premier, Darcy McKeough used to say, "You make capital investments for a better tomorrow."

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Well, that was certainly lively commentary that we just heard from the minister opposite, who hails from Peterborough, as he likes to mention and talk about.

I want to say a few words. We're here talking about the throne speech and what it means to the people of Ontario. It's very interesting, because I speak to people in Peterborough and I hear plenty of doom and gloom. I also hear from many people in Peterborough because my dad had a house in Peterborough, so I'm up there quite a bit, fixing it up. When they hear that I'm involved in politics and a member of the PC caucus, quite a few people have said to me that they are cousins of the member opposite. He must have a large, enormous network of cousins, because in fact one of my father's neighbours is a cousin. Obviously, his family goes way back in the region.

So I'm listening to him talk about Peterborough and I'm picturing Peterborough and remembering all of his cousins. Then he mentions Waterloo, which is my alma mater. His daughter—I believe he said her name was Shanae—attends Wilfrid Laurier, which is across the street from the University of Waterloo, where I went. Our caucus just visited Waterloo. We visited the Institute for Quantum Computing. We saw the train tracks of the train that hasn't been delivered yet. The tracks were built, and the train is nowhere to be seen.

So there are certainly some problems in Waterloo. They are anxious to be able to interact with the other hubs of technology in the GTA. Instead of being able to interact and visit each other, they're stuck in traffic because there is no train going within their region.

Anyhow, we look forward to hearing many more comments today on the throne speech.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to speak in this House and, today, to respond specifically to the Minister of Agriculture. I found out from listening intently that we share some history, because I was at that very same AMO conference. I'll have you know, I wasn't one of the councillors who stood up and applauded.

Hon. Jeff Leal: God bless you. God bless you.

Mr. John Vanthof: Even though I had a bit of an affiliation to the party at the time, I turned to my CEO and said, "This is not going to end well for municipalities in Ontario."

What happened was a massive download of provincial infrastructure that was downloaded to municipalities, including kilometres and kilometres and kilometres of roads. That, in turn, over the years has starved municipalities. While the Liberal government has uploaded some of those things, municipalities continue to be starved, particularly at the lower-tier infrastructure on roads in the farming areas, where they're having a really hard time. I think that whoever wins—and hopefully it's us—will have to fix that.

But one other thing that he mentioned: He started his comments on climate change. We all know that climate change is a huge issue. One of the things that the government has been working on is that there are large opportunities due to climate change for agriculture in northern Ontario. I'm just going to put a plug in again for the seed potato upgrading and distribution program in Temiskaming Shores. There are some questions on how it's going to proceed in the future. The minister and I are hopefully going to work together to make sure that that program, which is beneficial to the entire province, continues to benefit the entire province and northern Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's a pleasure to have an opportunity here to respond to the comments from my distinguished members on this side of the House, the member from Ajax–Pickering and the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I had the pleasure of serving as his parliamentary assistant in the first part of my mandate here. It was an inspirational opportunity to learn so much more about rural Ontario, and I continue to maintain those connections.

The minister talked at length about the cap-and-trade and the great work that we're doing with the environment. Last week, during constituency week, I had the opportunity to go and open the very first carbon-neutral farm in Ontario, out there by Woodstock, a wonderful place: Harcolm Farms. The proprietor is Robert McKinley, a dairy farmer with about 120 cattle. That, you will know, means he has three computerized dairy milking machines, because each one does about 40 cows, right? All of the effluent from those cows—the stuff that we don't want to talk too much about in the House, Speaker—it all gets collected. It gets scraped off the floor, put into pipes, and they put it into an anaerobic digester that drives two 10-kilowatt generators, one of which is the first bio-digesting FIT program in the province of Ontario. They get 25 cents a kilowatt hour to produce power from this substance, and the other 10 kilowatts are for on-farm use. It's a fantastic operation, built by an engineer, a great guy named John Hawkes, who organized this whole thing.

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This comes from the proceeds of cap-and-trade. The funding initially came from the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Science, but now we have an opportunity to duplicate this program on the 3,000 dairy cattle farms

across the province of Ontario to produce green energy from animal waste so that they can get off carbon and get off fuel. They can put this methane into transportation fuels. They can drive their grain dryers using the methane. This is fantastic.

We get the benefit of doing this because we have a cap. That was outlined in the throne speech, how cap-and-trade is helping us across the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I have in my hand the throne speech, page 12. It talks about how, when we care for each other, we change lives. Again, we're talking about the throne speech.

I want to draw your attention to mental health services in particular: 40% of all children who try to access mental health treatment can't get the treatment they need. There has been a 67% increase in hospitalizations for children with mental health disorders over the last decade. A majority of people who are being treated in Ontario today in emergency rooms after a suicide attempt are not seen by a psychiatrist for up to six months. How is it that caring for each other? How is that there's wait times of upwards of 18 months for people who are suffering from depression or anxiety?

The member from Dufferin-Caledon earlier this week spoke about the recommendations arising out of an all-party standing committee that she had the privilege of serving on, along with three other representatives from the government as well as the third party. Out of that work there were 23 recommendations. Ask yourself, Speaker, here tonight: How many of those 23 recommendations are reflected in this throne speech? Absolutely none, not one on the way forward—abysmal.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to either the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs or the member for Ajax.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I just want to thank the member from Thornhill; my good friend whom I have a lot of respect for, the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane; my colleague from Beaches-East York; and my friend from Whitby.

You know what? I would certainly challenge what that member just said. I had the privilege of serving on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. I served with a very distinguished group of parliamentarians. There were 23 recommendations. Some of them have been implemented, by any non-partisan view of those recommendations. And I ask, Madam Speaker, that people look at mental health from that perspective.

Do I recognize that more needs to be done? Absolutely. We invested a lot of money in Ontario to reduce wait times in a whole variety of areas—a very important thing to do. We've averaged about \$3 billion for mental health in the province of Ontario, but that needs to be stepped up.

Interestingly enough, the member referenced it not being in the throne speech; well, as part of that broad-based initiative that was fleshed out earlier this week,

next year 12,000 more young people will have community-based therapy and counselling. This will jump to 46,000 by 2021-22.

Madam Speaker, that is an important initiative, and I plead with people: Set aside the partisan pitchforks for one afternoon to recognize collectively that that is a very important thing to do. Political parties may have different ways to get there, but from time to time it would do the body politic well just to drop the partisan pitchforks and recognize substantial initiatives that are being made.

This will grow over subsequent years—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I rise this afternoon to speak to this substantive motion related to the speech from the throne, and I do it in my capacity as the official opposition critic for education and post-secondary education. I'm sharing my time with the member from Dufferin-Caledon.

Speaker, the throne speech did not lay out any new policy directions; rather, it merely was a summary of the Liberal government's record over the previous four years—and, in fact, the past 15 years, which will be adjudicated rightly on election day. During this time, and more recently in the throne speech, the theme it speaks to is about a time for care.

The government chose to ignore the mental health needs of students on community college and university campuses, including the universities and community colleges in my riding. This is despite student associations, faculty and administrators asking and pleading during every Ontario budget cycle for mental health investments. The government knew about the growing mental health crisis on Ontario campuses, but turned their back.

So much for the notion in the throne speech of a time for care. So much for the notion of helping students achieve their full potential, which is why the components of the throne speech purportedly dealing with education and the Premier's recent announcement, which the Minister of Agriculture related to student mental health, were particularly daunting.

I had hoped that the Liberal government would finally listen to students, faculty and administrators and acknowledge responsibility for the mental health crisis they created, and consequently outline in the throne speech a commitment to implement substantive mental health resources and supports for post-secondary students. But alas, there's nothing in the throne speech—absolutely nothing—to address the mental health crisis on campuses.

Unfortunately, Speaker, the Premier's mental health announcement, which followed closely on the heels of the throne speech, included a sum for community college and university students in desperate need for help now, not over four years. Once again, it's too little, too late. The government would like Ontario residents to believe that \$11 million allocated over four years to hire more mental health workers on campuses will address the mental health crisis on campuses that has existed for several years, years that there has been a Liberal

government. This works out to under \$3 million per year, and when allocated across each of the 44 community colleges and universities, it won't have the impact that students, faculty and administrators desperately need today to address mental health demands on their campuses.

I've spoken with administrators, faculty and student groups across the province, and there's absolutely unanimous agreement that the growing mental health needs of students are the most significant challenge on post-secondary campuses today. At each institution, I was told that there's a critical need for mental health resources and supports, and that the lack of government support has manifested in post-secondary students experiencing depression and anxiety at much higher rates.

Community colleges and universities are standing with their students, but they cannot meet this challenge alone. They need timely and substantial assistance from their government. The long-standing mental health crisis faced by Ontario students is one that the Liberal government chose not to address until 79 days prior to the provincial election.

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It's important to note, Speaker, that in their 2018 submission, the Council of Ontario Universities, Colleges Ontario, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance and the College Student Alliance collectively called on the government to take concrete action on mental health supports, including increasing spending on mental health and addictions to a minimum of 10% of the overall provincial health care budget; adopting a whole-community approach where government ministries, post-secondary institutions and health care and community organizations each play a specific role to strengthen post-secondary mental health supports and fill service gaps; and providing institutions with a dedicated portion—a dedicated portion, Speaker—of the mental health and addictions budget on an annual basis for mental health and well-being services.

These recommendations stem from a November 2017 team report titled *In It Together*, co-authored by the same four groups. This report provided shocking data. For example, 46% of students reported feeling so depressed in the previous year that it was difficult to function, up from 40% in 2013; and 14% had seriously considered suicide in the previous year, up from 11% in 2013.

These findings illustrate the depth of the mental health challenges that Ontario students face every day, but more importantly, the urgency of providing increased support now throughout Ontario's post-secondary system. The long-standing mental health crisis which exists on community college and university campuses is clear, and the components of the throne speech and the Premier's announcement yesterday specific to post-secondary students do not go far enough to modulate the crisis.

I want to share some time with my colleague so I'm going to wrap up pretty quickly.

The Liberal government would have Ontarians believe that now is a time for care, but if they cared, it wouldn't take six months to see a psychiatrist after a suicide

attempt. It's too little, too late and certainly not helping students, as the throne speech purports, to get the best possible start in their lives.

Speaker, Ontario families like yours and those that I have the privilege of serving in Whitby—Oshawa deserve to know that their loved ones on campus will get mental health care when they need it. They deserve no less.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the member from Dufferin—Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Thank you to my colleague from Whitby—Oshawa for allowing me to use some of his time. It's a pleasure to speak on behalf of the people of Dufferin—Caledon and discuss the government's record with their proposed throne speech.

The government's recent prorogation of the Legislature and their throne speech were supposed to be a reset. Having listened to the people of Dufferin—Caledon, it is clear that the government's legislative trick did not work. Resetting the government's legislative agenda is not going to remove the people of Ontario's frustration with this Liberal government.

People are tired of this government's waste and mismanagement. They're tired of the billions of dollars being wasted. Some examples include: \$8 billion on eHealth; \$1.1 billion cancelling gas plants; \$2 billion on smart meters—

Interjection: Old news.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: The \$4.5-million salary for the CEO of Hydro One; \$400 million on Presto card cost overruns; and \$304 million over budget on the Pan Am Games. The Ontario government paid \$6.5 million to consultants over the sale of Ontera and in the end sold the crown agency for only \$6 million. In total, they sold the company for a loss of \$61 million. Also, \$36 million on the bureaucracy at the LHINS; over \$600,000 for the logo of the new Liberal cannabis store; \$53,000 on Canada Goose jackets, and I could go on and on.

I heard one of the Liberal backbenchers quipping that it's old news. Well, in fact, that is the point. In 15 years, the old news, the bad news continue to rack up. People in Dufferin—Caledon want respect for their taxpayer dollars and they want accountability from their government. They are tired of a government which sold off Hydro One without saying anything about it in the election platform. They're tired of a government which spent \$4 billion and made up their own accounting practice tricks to hide the true costs of fixing their disastrous electricity policy. They're tired of a government that had five OPP investigations directly related to their government. They are tired of watered-down Auditor General oversight of government advertising so that they could spend \$17 million on ads meant to make the Liberal Party look good. They're tired of promising a balanced budget but delivering an \$8-billion deficit. They're tired of building a GO station in the Minister of Transportation's riding despite government experts saying it shouldn't be built.

People in Dufferin—Caledon want an end to hallway medicine at Brampton Civic Hospital. They want an end to the multi-year wait-lists for long-term-care beds in

Ontario. They want real and long-term relief on their hydro rates. They want a government that seeks to lower their taxes and respect the hard-earned tax dollars they collect.

Unfortunately, the Liberals' legislative reset will not accomplish any of this. Instead, it really means that all of the important legislation that my colleagues and I were bringing forward will have to begin again.

That's why I have reintroduced the End the Public Funding of Partisan Government Advertising Act, or Bill 7. In 2015, the Liberal government watered down the Auditor General's oversight of government advertising so that the auditor did not have the ability to veto government ads that they felt were partisan and self-congratulatory. Since that time, the Liberals have taken advantage of this loophole and spent millions of taxpayers' dollars on advertising that would not have been approved under the old rules. In fact, in 2017, the Liberals spent over \$17 million on advertising which the Auditor General said "had as their primary goal to foster a positive impression of the government party." That's a quote for "partisan."

As an example, the government spent nearly \$3 million on an ad campaign to promote the government's planned investments in infrastructure. The auditor said that this campaign was "self-congratulatory and aimed at ensuring that the government gets credit for its potential future spending plans." The problem with this is that tax dollars should not be used for the benefit of the Liberal Party. Secondly, spending this money on partisan ads takes away money from ads that could actually assist Ontarians. These self-congratulatory ads do not help people access service or require any action. They simply are meant to make the government look good. That's why the PC caucus and I have been calling on the government to stop these ads and instead use that money to raise awareness about human trafficking or the fentanyl crisis.

Yesterday, I also reintroduced the Sewage Bypass Reporting Act. This proposed legislation would require

the Minister of the Environment to publicly report when and where a sewage bypass occurs. Sewage bypasses occur when a treatment plant is forced to discharge partially treated or untreated sewage into local waterways to prevent flooding or basement flooding. The ministry already receives the information from the municipalities, but so far has refused to make this information public. Publicizing this information is important for two reasons. One, it will help Ontarians know when there is partially treated or raw effluent being discharged into the waterways they swim, sail and canoe in; secondly, it will ensure that Ontarians can better understand the importance of investing in our sewer, waste water and storm water infrastructure.

Finally, I intend to reintroduce—because of the prorogation, I must reintroduce—my proposed legislation entitled the Aggregate Recycling Promotion Act. I had introduced a previous version of the Aggregate Recycling Promotion Act in 2013. While it did not become law, the government did incorporate some of the principles into the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, which now reads, "Infrastructure planning and investment should endeavour to make use of acceptable recycled aggregates."

However, despite this wording in the legislation, there are still municipalities and government organizations which refuse to even consider using recycled aggregates when they could in their public projects. The Environmental Commissioner, in the 2017 report, criticized Metrolinx for its lack of using recycled aggregates and even called the agency a "laggard" in recycled aggregate.

I get the sense I'm going to have to wrap up, but allow me to say that this proposed legislation is crucial because the Ontario government is the largest user of aggregates.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Seeing that it's 6 p.m., this House stands adjourned until Monday, March 26, 2018, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Hon. / L'hon. Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité
MacLaren, Jack (IND)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Milczyn, Hon. / L'hon. Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite enfance et de la Garde d'enfants
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Hon. / L'hon. Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation
Vacant	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Vacant	Parkdale–High Park	
Vacant	St. Paul's	
Vacant	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Chair / Président: Michael Mantha
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Catherine Fife
Granville Anderson, James J. Bradley
Bob Delaney, Catherine Fife
Michael Harris, Monte Kwinter
Michael Mantha, Mario Sergio
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Han Dong
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Mike Colle, Han Dong
Brad Duguid, Ann Hoggarth
Lisa MacLeod, Cristina Martins
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Arthur Potts
Yvan Baker, Grant Crack
Lisa Gretzky, Sophie Kiwala
Sam Oosterhoff, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi, Lisa M. Thompson
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Brad Duguid, Wayne Gates
Sophie Kiwala, Cristina Martins
Sam Oosterhoff, Randy Pettapiece
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**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
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Lorenzo Berardinetti, Amrit Mangat
Jim McDonnell, Arthur Potts
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Liz Sandals, Monique Taylor
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**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley
Joe Dickson, Amrit Mangat
Michael Mantha, Deborah Matthews
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bob Delaney, Vic Dhillon
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Lisa MacLeod
Liz Sandals
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Grant Crack, Joe Dickson
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Lou Rinaldi, Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

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Lorne Coe, Mike Colle
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Ann Hoggarth, Gila Martow
Ted McMeekin, Peter Tabuns
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley